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MANUAL  
OF  
MORAL PHILOSOPHY.  

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HUMPHREYS.

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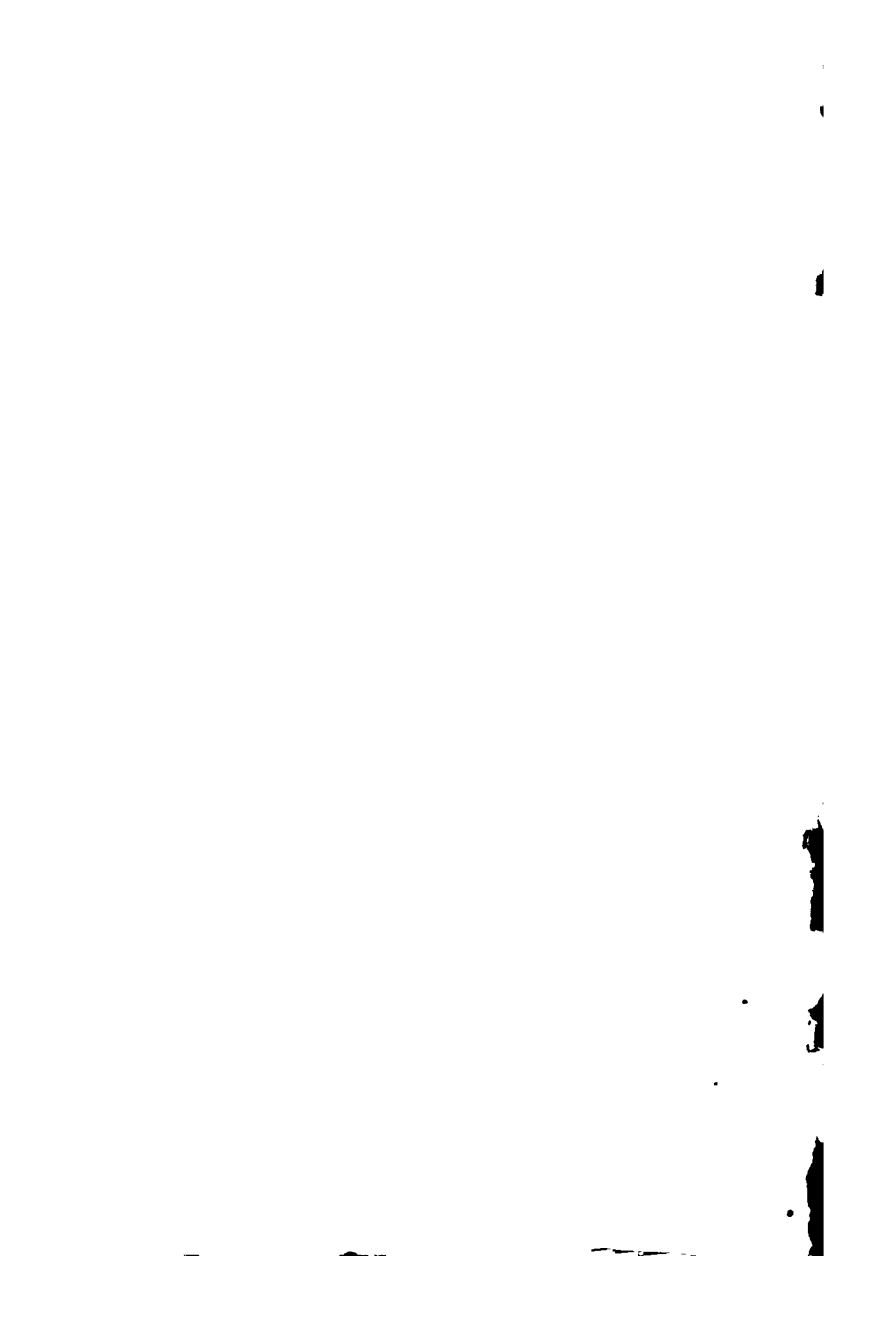
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**MANUAL**  
**OF**  
**MORAL PHILOSOPHY.**



**MANUAL**  
**OF**  
**MORAL PHILOSOPHY.**

**FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.**

**BY**  
**E. R. HUMPHREYS, LL.D.**

**HEAD MASTER OF CHELTENHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL:**  
**AUTHOR OF THE MANUALS OF CIVIL LAW, AND POLITICAL SCIENCE,**  
**&c. &c.**

**TO WHICH IS PREFIXED**  
**A PRELIMINARY ESSAY,**  
**ON THE**  
**RELATIONS OF NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.**

**BY THE**  
**REV. J. E. RIDDLE, M.A.**

**AUTHOR OF AN ENGLISH-LATIN AND A LATIN-ENGLISH DICTIONARY:**  
**A MANUAL OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES, &c. &c.**

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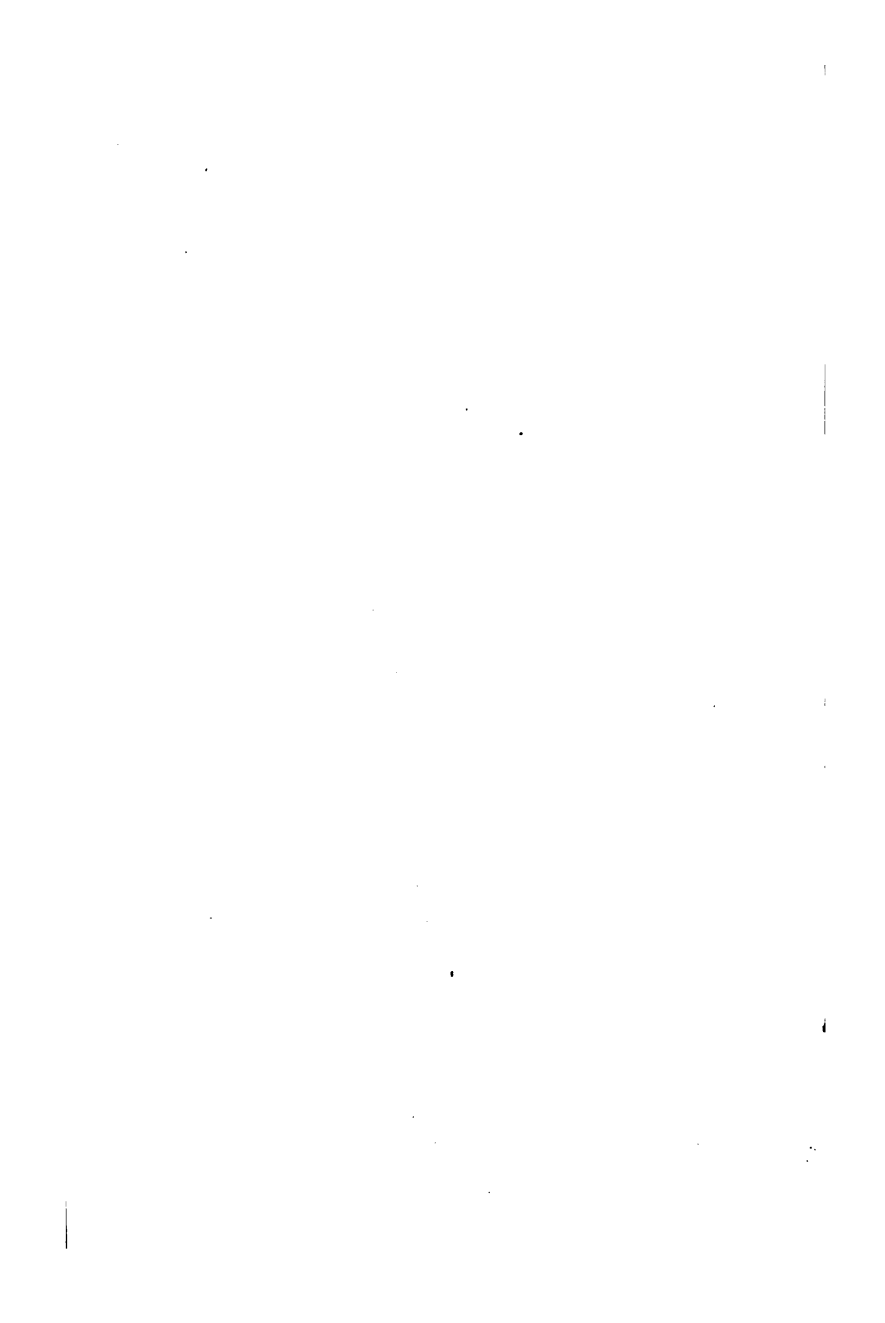




**BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.**

TO  
SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, BART.  
PROFESSOR OF METAPHYSICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,  
THIS LITTLE WORK  
IS INSCRIBED,  
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF MANY ACTS OF KINDNESS,  
AND AS A TRIBUTE OF SINCERE RESPECT  
TO ONE OF BRITAIN'S PROFOUNDTEST THINKERS  
AND MOST ACCOMPLISHED SCHOLARS,  
BY HIS FRIEND  
THE AUTHOR.

CHEL TENHAM,  
*Feb.* 19, 1856.



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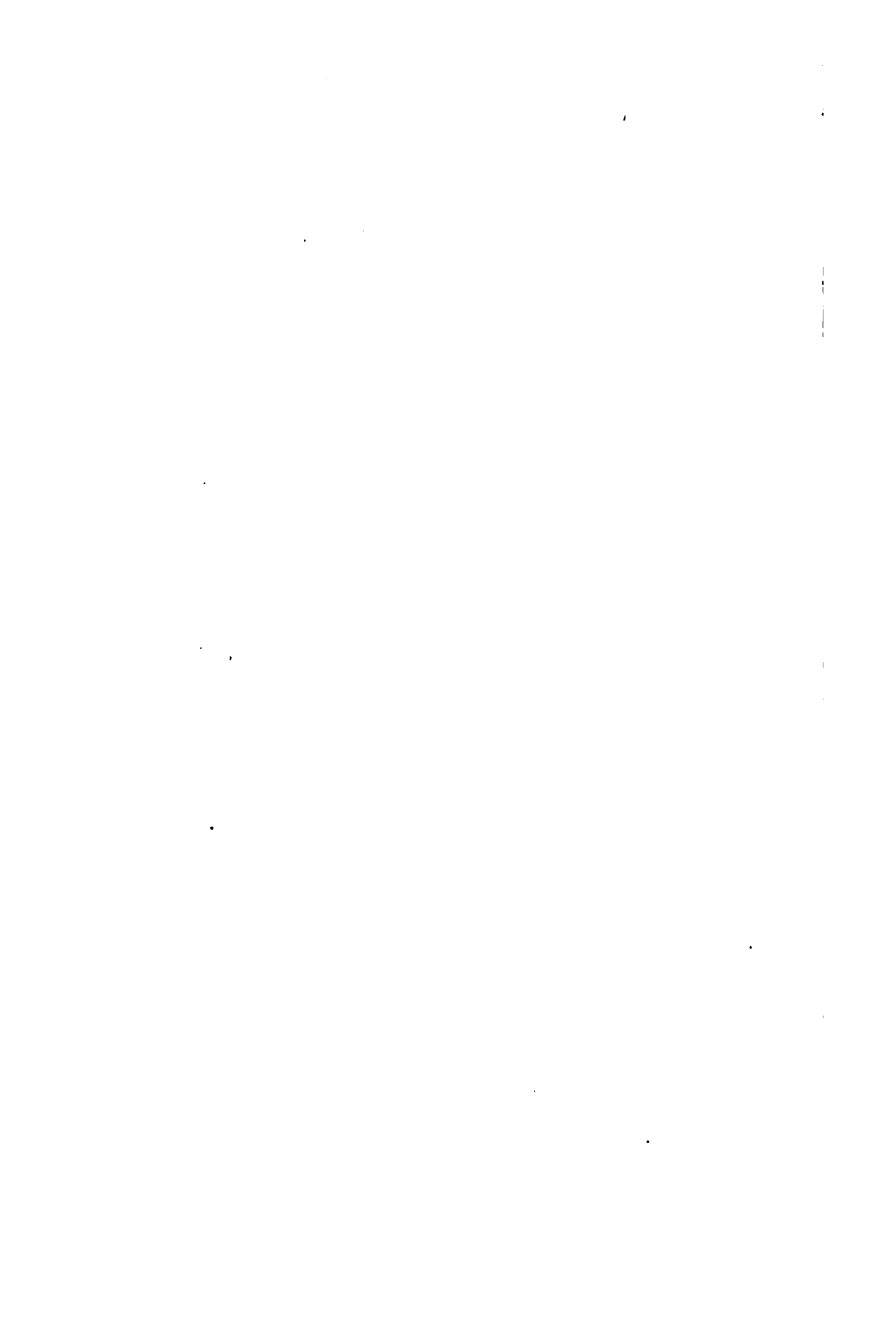
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**PRELIMINARY ESSAY:**  
**THE RELATIONS OF NATURAL AND REVEALED**  
**RELIGION.**





## PRELIMINARY ESSAY.

---

THE claims of Moral Science are often falsely estimated, under different points of view. Some persons, indiscreetly jealous of the honour of Divine revelation, are unwilling to concede to the human mind the possession of any inherent power relating to matters of right and duty; and they appear also to labour under an impression that the charge of depravity, which Scripture brings against mankind, involves the abnegation of any such native faculty of moral apprehension. Hence they disallow all ethical pretensions, either as savouring of a vain and arrogant rivalry with the voice of revelation, or even as presuming to offer contradiction to at least some portion of its teaching.—Other men, again, under the influence of a different bias, are eager to assign to moral philosophy a place and dignity to which it has no just claim. They extol human ethics with a view to depreciate revelation. They attribute to the mind powers which it does not possess, and claim for it the honour of discoveries which it was never competent to make; and,

having thus invested the science of morals with a fictitious dignity, and assigned to it an imaginary domain, they do not hesitate to ask, What need have we of any further help or guidance from on high?

In each of these cases, the error is supported by a false estimate of the nature and limits of the science which is so unduly commended or so improperly decried, and by the consequent want of a just appreciation of its bearings upon revealed truth. It is therefore a matter of great importance, not only that ethical science should be popularly taught with clearness and precision, as in the following Treatise, but also that the student should be at the same time provided with a correct view of the relation which subsists between human knowledge and divine teaching,—between morals and theology,—and, more expressly, between what may be termed the theology of Nature, and the theology or doctrines of the Bible. This latter task I now endeavour to perform, as well as I can within the brief limits of this Preliminary Essay.

I. It cannot be denied that the place of Ethics has too often been usurped by science falsely so called,—by unsubstantial theories, and by false or

overstrained conclusions: and to this cause we may trace the existence of many unfavourable prejudices, and of much sensitive aversion. But there is a sound moral philosophy which cannot be overthrown, and which ought not to be neglected or despised. And it is sound, because, like all other true science, it is founded, and properly founded, on fact.

Now, the fact which lies at the foundation of true ethical science is the existence and supreme authority of Conscience, or the moral sense, as an original and constituent principle of the human mind. According to the constitution of our nature, we intuitively recognise, and instinctively feel, what is right or wrong; and, at the same time, we know, by our own consciousness, that we ought to pursue the right and to avoid the wrong. "There is a superior principle of reflection, or conscience, in every man," says Bishop Butler, in his second Sermon upon Human Nature, "which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: which, without being consulted,

without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer thereof accordingly: and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own." These views of human nature, which have been adopted and expounded by many modern writers, and are duly recognised in the present Manual, include various points of great practical importance in their bearing upon the question now before us.

Man possesses an original moral constitution, or a nature which recognises, in the way of immediate conviction and feeling, certain primary or fundamental principles concerning right and wrong. These principles are accordingly to be viewed as ultimate facts in human nature, such as no erroneous speculation can overthrow, and which, when admitted, are incapable of being resolved into any higher or more simple principles. Every individual is naturally conscious of their existence in himself; and by observation he may discover their existence in other men. But whence they come, or how to account for them or to explain them, we cannot say, except by referring to the fiat of the Creator. It is by

an axiomatic principle that we pronounce justice to be right and injustice to be wrong, just as it is by the same kind of principle that we pronounce the whole to be greater than a part. Outward objects or circumstances may call these principles into exercise; but the principles themselves have already been planted within us.

Attempts to analyse or explain our moral principles have, indeed, been made; and hence have arisen the various theories of Morals, of which a succinct account is given in the following Treatise. And it may be worthy of remark concerning some of the theories thus propounded, that, although on the whole they are defective, and fail to attain their professed object, they are yet more or less useful, as contributing to challenge attention to certain elements of truth which have been too frequently overlooked. A theory, as such, may be imperfect, untenable, and wrong; but it by no means follows that all the principles on which it proceeds are in themselves vicious, or undeserving of regard. The theory may not announce the truth, but it may yet have a finger pointing in the direction of the truth.

Thus, while it is a wrong theory which would reduce all our moral principles to a process of

reasoning, it is yet true that conscience partakes of the nature of intellect. We correctly speak, not only of a moral sense or sentiment in man, but also of a moral faculty; implying that, while conscience is not subject to the dictates of reason considered as an independent faculty, it yet at the same time comprehends intellectual power in itself. Butler speaks of conscience as including both "a sentiment of the mind" and a "perception of the heart," and says, that "we cannot form a notion of the faculty without taking in judgment." And Reid distinctly affirms that "the moral faculty, or conscience, is both an active and an intellectual power of the mind;"—an active power, that is, a principle influencing conduct; and an intellectual power, that is, a faculty whereby we perceive moral relations. There is a perception of the intellect as well as a sentiment of the heart; or rather, which seems to have been Butler's view, the heart, or man's inmost moral and spiritual nature, possesses within itself an intellectual power. It is something greater which includes the less.

Again, the optimist theory, or that which founds morality on convenience or utility, whether public or private, must be regarded as unsound. But yet it is to be remembered that,

while our interest or happiness is not the ground or reason of our virtue, still virtue and happiness,—moral rectitude and our true interests,—are found to coincide. It is the manifest and acknowledged tendency of our moral nature, when obeyed, to produce both private and public good; to yield the well-being and prosperity both of individuals and of the community at large. Nor is this all. We may often employ a sense of interest, or a practical regard to hurtful or beneficial consequences, in order to determine the real character of particular actions. That which does not constitute the quality of an act, may yet indicate that quality; and such an indication may be in many cases needful. Still, however, even when we may have taken into account the probable consequences of an act or a course of action, in forming our estimate of its moral character, if the question be proposed, Why ought you to pursue it? the answer is, 'Because my heart tells me so. I know, by an inward principle, that I am bound to follow or do what is right whenever I perceive it to be right. With respect to particular actions, I do not hesitate to consult those outward indications which I know by experience to be among the marks of virtue: but these indications are not



independent of my own judgment, nor do I recognise in them the injunctions of a moral authority.' This point has been discussed by Sir James Mackintosh in his observations on the difference between the theory of moral sentiment and the criterion of morality; and perhaps few persons will hesitate to say, with Dr. Whewell, that "we may hold that morality is an original quality of actions, and may still form our rules of morality by tracing the consequences of actions." Here, however, we have need of caution; indeed, we require a certain cautionary or counteracting principle, without which we may be easily drifted to some of the worst practical results of a bare utilitarian theory. If it be admitted that, under any circumstances, or to any extent, we may "form our rules of morality by tracing the consequences of actions,"—or even that, in particular instances, we may take into account the consequences of actions in order to determine their character,—care must be taken that this principle be not so expounded, or applied, as to lend countenance to the practice of covering the inherent evil of an act with the plea or consciousness of a good intention. Perhaps the safe practical rule of conduct is neither more nor less than this;—that the foresight of evil

consequences may sometimes lead us to abstain from an action which our consciences might otherwise approve as right; but that the expectation of good results is never sufficient to warrant the performance of an action which our minds otherwise condemn as wrong. This rule is analogous to the well-known maxim, that we are always wrong in resisting the dictates of conscience, but are not always right in following them.

Apart, however, from all theories, we admit the existence of Conscience, or a moral faculty and sentiment, among the primary constituents of human nature. But we must go on to observe distinctly, what has already been implied, that conscience is more than a faculty and sentiment; it has a place of presidency in the mental economy,—it is a law. “This principle,” says Reid, “has, from its nature, an authority to direct and to determine with regard to our conduct; to judge, to acquit or to condemn, and even to punish; an authority which belongs to no other principle in the human mind.” (Essay III. part iii. chap. 8.) It involves the idea not only of moral right, but of moral obligation; it has a voice not only of instruction, but of authority. This office of our moral judgment, or the authority and supremacy of conscience, is clearly

stated in the passage from Bishop Butler quoted at the outset of these remarks ; and it is needless to observe how forcibly that great writer has illustrated and maintained his position in various portions of his works. He well describes the moral principle as holding a place in our mental system, corresponding to the place of a regulator in the system of a watch. Nor is it to be for a moment supposed that the obligation of morality extends only to the outward conduct : it addresses itself immediately to the will and disposition of the agent, and it takes cognizance of the outward act only so far as it is an exponent of the inward state of heart. "Conscience in every man," says Butler, "distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions." It condemns no act which is not voluntary ; nor does it commend any act as good, except so far as it proceeds from the free will of the agent, in conformity with the settled rule of right.

Once more. Conscience is attended with emotion ; and, as a sentiment, it is preeminently reflexive. We experience pleasure or pain at the contemplation of right or wrong conduct. We find ourselves impelled to survey our own dispositions and conduct past ; and we are so con-

stituted, as to experience satisfaction or complacency when conscience approves the past, or pain, sometimes amounting to anguish, when conscience condemns it.

On the whole, therefore, Conscience may be defined to be an inward principle of human nature, which, as an intellectual faculty, distinguishes between right and wrong,—as an active power, commands us to pursue the one and to avoid the other,—and, in its reflexive exercise, bears witness to the agreement or disagreement of our own dispositions and conduct with the rule which itself propounds and sanctions. And, accordingly, virtue may be said to consist in voluntary obedience to moral law.

We now advance towards our more immediate subject. When we speak of obligation, or a law,—and recognise a sense of moral obligation, or the felt presence of a law, as closely interwoven with the constitution of our nature,—we find ourselves standing on the threshold of a still higher truth. The true idea of obligation necessarily implies that of a superior; the idea of a law involves the notion of a lawgiver. Nor is it too much to say that the constitution of the human mind demands the recognition of a personal superior and lawgiver, a supreme Being,

the moral Governor of the universe. It is not an abstraction, or a principle, but it is a living being superior to ourselves, it is God, who binds, and lays his commands upon, the soul: and a sense of responsibility is as much an original principle of our nature as is the sense of obligation. It is a matter of consciousness, that we are liable to be called to account for our conduct, whether right or wrong. There may, indeed, be some men who have lost this sense of responsibility, just as there are some men who habitually confound the distinction between right and wrong, and some men also who have abused and lost their intellectual powers. But still the fact remains,—a fact, like all others, witnessed by observation and experience,—that there has been implanted within us an immediate sense or consciousness of responsibility for our conduct, considered as morally good or evil. And this sense of responsibility involves a direct discovery of God. At the same time, conscience, with its faculty of perceiving moral relations, is capable of marking a relation to the Deity as the highest which man can sustain, and as involving moral obligation of the most imperative kind. It has power to perceive that, while there is a necessity for right dispositions and right conduct towards

our fellow-men, there is also a call for the due exercise of our will, and for correct behaviour, towards the Supreme.

More than this. The inherent principle of conscience, with its sense of obligation and responsibility, points not only to the existence and authority of a supreme Being, but also to his moral character. We cannot but regard Him as possessing in his own nature the attributes of justice and benevolence, while we feel that He has impressed upon our hearts a love and veneration for those qualities, accompanied with a sense of obligation to put them forth in exercise. Certainly it requires no more than a single step in reasoning to assure us that the Author of our being must possess a moral nature in Himself; that He cannot be either unrighteous or malignant, but that He must rather be distinguished by the opposite qualities in their utmost purity and perfection. "We read the moral character of God," says Dr. Chalmers, "in the book of our own consciences." (*Nat. Theol.* book v. ch. 4. §. 11.) Our own heart possesses the conviction, not only that we are subject to the dominion of a great Being above us, but that the nature of this supreme Governor bears on it the stamp of infinite righteousness and perfect goodness. And

hence it has been well said that morality proceeds not so much from the will, as from the nature, of God.

At the same time, there is a large class of phenomena in the world without, which we perceive to be in harmony with the dictates of the moral nature within us. As to the existence of the Deity, we hear, as it were, from all created objects, one harmonious confession, "The hand that made us is divine." We recognise the righteousness of God in those manifold tendencies of virtue to produce happiness, which obviously exist according to the arrangements of Divine Providence. And in proof of the divine benevolence, we find ourselves surrounded by ten thousand wonderful organisations and adaptations, manifestly designed for the purpose of contributing to the welfare, comfort, and enjoyment of the countless creatures of God's hand. In a word, we find ourselves living in the midst of a vast system of external objects, wonderfully adapted to our moral constitution, and charged with distinct attestations to the same attributes of Deity as those which have already announced themselves within the chambers of our hearts.

Let me sum up all that I have thus far said. Morality is founded in the nature of God and

man, and in the relations of men to God and to one another. It consists (to adopt the definition of Professor Mills) in "an obedience to the law and constitution of man's nature assigned him by the Deity in conformity to his own essential and unchangeable attributes, the effect of which is the general happiness of his creatures." With its sense of obligation and responsibility, it involves a recognition of the Creator, at once in his existence and in his high moral attributes, together with a sense of those obligations to love, worship, and obedience, which arise from the relations subsisting between Him and ourselves. Not that the human mind knows or discovers these things by any innate power, independently of outward teaching: it is more than probable that even the first elements of moral and religious truth were originally conveyed to man, or set objectively before him, by divine communication. But there is a logical sequence in these truths; and the mind is capable of tracing their connection, as well as of embracing the truths themselves. And thus Morality expands itself into Natural Religion.

II. While, however, such is one class of facts which present themselves to the observation of



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sphere of observation, is not perfect. It is not what it yet evidently appears to have been designed to be. The will is not unfrequently swayed by the affections and desires, in opposition to that voice of conscience which has been appointed to control them. And this is moral disorder. Here is a spiritual apparatus which does not work according to the obvious intention of its framer. And such a phenomenon, to say the least, is startling.

Besides this, conscience does not fully develop itself. Notwithstanding the possession of sufficient information, and the presence of an adequate field of action, the moral sense in man has yet invariably failed to attain its complete maturity. Like all our other powers, conscience, whether regarded as a faculty or as a sentiment, has been designed for gradual advancement, or growth. It has been prepared, by the Creator, as the subject of proper culture; and it has been appointed, like our purely intellectual faculties, to gather strength by exercise. Nor have we reason to suppose that, even according to the perfect constitution of human nature, the conscience would ever possess its highest delicacy of perception, or would be endowed with all its vigour, independently of its appropriate training, and of due

employment upon its proper objects. It has been observed by Dr. Reid, that "the seeds, as it were, of moral discernment are planted in the mind by Him who made us. They grow up in their proper season, and are at first delicate, and easily warped. Their progress depends very much upon their being duly cultivated and properly exercised." (Essay III. part iii. chap. 8.) But then, in point of fact, their progress is, in most cases, materially checked: the due development of conscience, "by the aid of instruction, education, exercise, and habit," (*ib.*) does not take effect. Man's inmost "senses," or organs of spiritual sensation, are not duly "exercised to discern good and evil." (Heb. v. 14.) And the highest power of the soul, instead of being carried forward to perfection, is observed to be, more or less, in a state of deterioration and decay.

Hence it is that conscience has not only lost much of its commanding influence, but is also deficient in its perceptive power. The very first principles of moral truth are not unfrequently distorted or obscured among mankind, just as the first principles of intellectual truth are also sometimes perverted or unperceived. The moral faculty is so impaired, that the ideas of right and wrong are mischievously confounded; and

the moral sentiment is so weak, as not to afford even a hindrance or check to the impulse of passion. In like manner, the sense of obligation and responsibility are too often worn away.

At the same time, the reflexive power of conscience is in a state of corresponding disorder or decay. It is either more or less charged,—sometimes fearfully charged,—with a sense of guilt and with the agonies of remorse; or else its functions are more or less suspended, and gradually cease, until the conscience becomes altogether seared and silent. This latter condition is, indeed, to be regarded as an advanced stage of moral depravity; for it is a matter of common observation, that men may suffer, and even acutely suffer, from the upbraidings of conscience, while yet that conscience is utterly unable to impel them to the performance of what is right, or to restrain them from doing wrong. And while the inward monitor thus bears witness to the guilt of an individual, it also conveys the unhappy and menacing sense of a state of variance with God; the same moral nature records at once man's departure from rectitude, and the Divine aversion from this abnormal condition of the creature. And in proportion as man escapes from the wretchedness of moral accusations by

imposing silence on the inward witness, he is exposed to other miseries which flow from the unbridled indulgence of his appetites and passions. So that, whether the reflexive conscience be the seat of pain or of lethargy, it is still in a state of disorder, opposed to its proper condition, which is a condition at once of activity and of peace.

These facts of our moral nature have been exhibited on a large scale in the history of the ancient heathen world. The vices which prevailed, for example, among the highly civilized Greeks and Romans, make it manifest that the appetites and passions of the great masses of those people were little, if at all, restrained by the authority of conscience; while the systems of moral philosophy which obtained amongst their most grave and learned men are so defective, and their maxims are so far below the standard of real virtue, as plainly to bespeak the general obscurantism and imbecility of the moral faculty itself. At the same time, in the records which have come down to us from these past generations of mankind, we find, on the one hand, attestations of an oppressive sense of guilt, or, on the other, indications of that apathy and senselessness of the reflexive conscience which has already been described as its last stage of corruption.

Again. Besides the disorders of man's moral nature, there exist also certain phenomena in the divine government, and in the physical world around us, which, to say the least, appear anomalous and strange, when viewed with reference to those attributes of perfect justice and benevolence which, on other accounts, we find ourselves compelled to ascribe to the supreme Governor of the universe. A connection, indeed, subsists between moral evil and physical suffering, between vice and misery; and this connection pleads in favour of the divine justice. But then this arrangement is by no means absolute and universal; and we often behold the spectacle of virtue oppressed and of vice triumphant. And how are we to account for the very existence and toleration of moral evil, or of social disorders, under the dominion of a God of righteousness and goodness? How also are we to explain the presence of physical pain and suffering, together with all the miseries and calamities of life? It may be that a system of compensation and retribution will take effect in some future state of being; and our very sense of the present disorders, combined with an apprehension of the Divine perfections, is sufficient to induce some expectations of a final and equitable adjustment:

but then, what assurance have we that a future state of existence, if such be in reserve for us, will be in any respect different from that of which we have already had experience? How do we know that there will not be a perpetuation of the same laws, and of the same disorders? Is it not even possible that there may be two distinct principles or sources of good and evil, two great independent rulers of the world, whether present or to come, in conflict with each other? We see, indeed, that, in many cases, evil is overruled and made subservient to good; and this consideration may in some measure relieve our perplexity. But still, in a certain measure, the perplexity remains; and there are some minds to which these distressing questions, instead of receiving any degree of solution from the arguments which reason can suggest, appear to become more intricate and hopeless in proportion to the care and minuteness with which they are examined.

More than this. Setting aside all speculative matters, there yet remains the great practical question, how to remedy the evils which exist? How shall we contend against moral evil, and, if but gradually, yet eventually, overcome it? How shall we bear up against physical and social

evil, with the prospect of at last escaping it altogether? No such discovery has yet been made. All history shows that the tendency of human nature, if left to itself, is, not towards improvement, but towards increasing degeneracy and decay. And, as regards physical and social inconveniences, disorders, and sufferings, experience tells us that we must not hope to be entirely free from them in this life, and that, just in proportion as we overcome or get beyond some of them, we almost unavoidably fall within the range of others.

Accordingly, Natural Religion, in face of both those classes of facts which have now been considered, and employing her best energies in comparing them together, is doomed to hopeless perplexity, and is left in a condition of helpless incompetency and distress.

III. Still, however, Natural Religion subsists; and we are now prepared to inquire, what relation does it sustain to a distinct revelation from heaven concerning our moral and spiritual interests,—a revelation such as Christianity professes itself to be?

This relation may be recognised under two several points of view, corresponding to the two



the moral Governor of the universe, an abstraction, or a principle, but it being superior to ourselves, it is God, and lays his commands upon, the sense of responsibility is as much a principle of our nature as is the sensation. It is a matter of consciousness, we are liable to be called to account for our conduct, whether right or wrong. There may, indeed, be some men who have lost this sense of responsibility, just as there are some men who confound the distinction between right and wrong, and some men also who have abused their intellectual powers. But still it remains,—a fact, like all others, with observation and experience,—that there is implanted within us an immediate consciousness of responsibility for our conduct, considered as morally good or evil. And this sense of responsibility involves a direct dependence on God. At the same time, conscience is a faculty of perceiving moral relations, of marking a relation to the Deity as our moral Governor, in which man can sustain, and as involving an obligation of the most imperative kind, the power to perceive that, while there is a God, for right dispositions and right conduct

# PRELIMINARY

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In the first place, the existence of a moral *sense* in man, such as we have described, makes him capable of receiving a revelation. Independently of his moral constitution, he would be no fit subject for Christianity. None of the inferior creatures possess a faculty for receiving such a communication from the Author of their being; but the moral sense, or conscience, is such a faculty in man. There is reason to believe that it was designed, from the very first, to be the recipient of an appropriate revelation; and that the will of God was declared to it, externally or objectively, even in the period of man's primitive integrity. This faculty, although impaired, continues to exist; and herein lies our capacity for a new and further revelation, adapted to our altered circumstances, if it should please God to impart one.

Nor is this all. The possession of this power not only makes us capable of receiving such a gift, but also imposes upon us the duty of accepting it when offered. The presence of a moral faculty and sentiment, involving in it a recognition of the existence of a Deity and of his aims upon our regard, challenges attention to

It is not, however, as if the mind were a mere passive receptacle of ideas from without. The mind is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself. The mind is not a mere mirror, which simply reflects the world as it is; it is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself. The mind is not a mere mirror, which simply reflects the world as it is; it is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself.

While, therefore, it is true that the mind is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself, it is not true that the mind is a mere passive receptacle of ideas from without. The mind is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself. The mind is not a mere mirror, which simply reflects the world as it is; it is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself. The mind is not a mere mirror, which simply reflects the world as it is; it is a living, active power, which, in the process of knowledge, is constantly modifying and re-modifying itself.

Secondly. If we turn to a consideration of our moral disorders, and think of all the immoral and consequent perplexities which wait upon the present abnormal condition, we find in Plato

different acts of phenomena which we have been surveying.

In the first place, the existence of a moral nature in man, such as we have described, makes him capable of receiving a revelation. Independently of his moral constitution, he would be no fit subject for Christianity. None of the inferior creatures possess a faculty for receiving such a communication from the Author of their being; but the moral sense, or conscience, is such a faculty in man. There is reason to believe that it was designed, from the very first, to be the recipient of an appropriate revelation; and that the will of God was declared to it, externally or objectively, even in the period of man's primitive integrity. This faculty, although impaired, continues to exist: and herein lies our capacity for a new and further revelation, adapted to our altered circumstances: if it should please God to impart one.

Not is this all. The possession of this power not only makes us capable of receiving such a gift, but also imposes upon us the duty of accepting it when offered. The receiver of a moral truth, and consequently, involving it is a recognition on the receiver's part of the duty and of his relation upon our power, challenges attention to

any message which may profess to come to us from Him, provided that it wears the *primâ facie* appearance of a divine communication, or no appearance to the contrary. It is true, that such a revelation must be warranted by its own adequate credentials: but then our very nature binds us to examine and give due attention to those credentials; and it is to be remembered that no mean portion of the evidences of a divine revelation consists in its internal adaptation to our actual moral condition and requirements.

While, therefore, it can never be said that natural religion is capable of developing itself into Christianity, as it may be said that morality developes itself into natural religion;—or, to adopt the phraseology of Dr. Chalmers on this subject, while it is not true that natural religion forms the logical basis of the revealed;—it is yet to be observed, that the former is in many respects needful in order to our reception of the latter. Reason, or the exercise of man's intellectual and moral powers, is not faith; but yet faith is not independent of reason.

Secondly. If we turn to a consideration of our moral disorders, and think of all the anomalies and consequent perplexities which wait upon our present abnormal condition, we find in Natu

Religion not only a capacity for such a revelation as the Gospel, but also a manifest want of it. For, natural religion, while it raises a multitude of anxious inquiries, cannot answer them; while it feels and deploras its need, it can never, of itself, create, or even discover, a supply. It is therefore not enough to say that revelation is a supplement, or something superadded, to natural religion. It is, to say the least, a supplement of a very peculiar kind; not merely ornamental, or even simply additional, but such as to meet the demands of an existing necessity, such as to fill up a vacuum; a remedial supplement, like medicine to a diseased body, or a healing application to a wound. The sense of guilt within can be met only by a declaration of forgiveness from without; forgiveness, too, consistent with the existence of all those divine perfections to which our hearts bear witness. The Gospel makes this declaration, and confirms it, pointing to the Saviour's work of atonement; but, as none less than God himself could originate and execute this scheme of redemption, so the discovery of it, when completed, must for ever have remained beyond the reach of our own natural powers. Again, in the moral imbecility of man,—his utter inability to restore to his own con-

science its rightful authority and power, or to repair the moral faculty, and restore it to its proper vigour,—we find, practically, another cry for external help. So that, on the whole, in speculative matters, nature can propose inquiries, but cannot solve them; in practice, nature can feel her deficiencies, but cannot repair them. Natural theology, says Dr. Chalmers, who insists largely upon this point, “is at best but a science *in transitu*; and its lessons are those of a preparatory school.”... “It is baffled in all its attempts to decipher the state and prospects of man, viewed in the relation of an offending subject to an offended sovereign. In a word, its chief obscurity, and which it is wholly unable to disperse, is that which rests on the hopes and the destiny of our species. There is in it enough of manifestation to awaken the fears of guilt, but not enough again to appease them. It emits, and audibly emits, a note of terror; but in vain do we listen for one authentic word of comfort from any of its oracles. It is able to see the danger, but not the deliverance. It can excite the forebodings of the human spirit, but cannot quell them; knowing just enough to stir the perplexity, but not enough to set the perplexity at rest.... It prompts the question, but cannot frame or furnish the reply.” (*Nat. Theol.* book v. ch. 4.)



Now, if we examine the actual facts or phenomena of revealed religion, we shall find that the system adapts itself at once to the capabilities and to the wants of our moral nature.

The truths which the Bible declares are, not, indeed, such as man can find within himself, or such as he can, as it were, draw up from the depths of his own consciousness, but yet they are such as to awaken a response and an acknowledgment from the voice within. The facts proclaimed by revelation address themselves precisely to that moral faculty and sentiment which we find already existing in our nature,—to our sense of right and wrong, and of moral obligation,—to our apprehension of the Deity,—and to our perception of the relations which we sustain to Him and to one another. Revelation is, in itself, distinct from the announcements of the soul, or the manifestations of its own nature, with which it has sometimes been confounded; but still, in its subject-matter or contents, it is in harmony with those announcements, when truly and fully interpreted, and so far as they are the manifestations of that nature itself, and not merely of some of its corruptions. Revealed religion is not the same as natural religion even in its highest attainable perfection; yet it sustains towards it the relation of a real relation and fitness. The truths of the Bible

are such as our own minds, according to their original constitution, are prepared to receive; and to which they are ready to do homage, as emanating from that very Being who implanted our moral faculties within us. We have not, indeed, a standard within, by which to measure the truth that comes to us from above, nor have we any inward light whereby we may be able to correct the outward teachings of God's word; but yet we find that the truth is speaking to an ear within, and that the light from heaven is recognised as good by that eye which God has given to the soul.

Again. Revealed religion is not only adapted to our moral nature, considered as God created it, but it also supplies the wants of that nature, viewed as marred and ruined by transgression.

We have seen, that a part of our corruption consists in the obscuration of the moral faculty, or its loss of perceptive power as to the distinction between right and wrong. There is an infirmity or distortion of moral perception, not at first complete in the case of individuals or of a society, but always tending to increase in proportion to the neglect of light received, and too plainly manifested on a large scale in the low standard of heathen morals, and in the defective

systems of many ethical philosophers. Now, it may be the fact, that, even in its normal condition, our moral faculty would have needed information and guidance from without: for, there may be some truths affecting our moral relations and conduct, which even the most perfect human faculties may be unable to discover; and it may have been the wise design of the Creator, not that we should be able to discover these truths, but only that we should be qualified to apprehend and to receive them when disclosed to us by Himself. But, be this as it may, certain it is that, in our actual state, the need of divine illumination is absolute and urgent. And Revelation supplies the want. In this respect, the teaching of the Bible has often been compared to the aids of the telescope in natural philosophy. And it may be true that, as the telescope reveals objects which the naked eye, in its best estate, could never have discovered; so, from the very first, there may have existed the need of an external revelation to disclose facts in the moral world, which would for ever have lain beyond the reach of those powers which God originally implanted in the mind. But, in the case before us, the comparison lies, not so much between the capabilities of the naked eye and the powers of

the telescope, as between the capabilities of an eye weakened by disease, and the powers of an optical instrument adapted to overcome the defects of an impaired vision. And it is a matter of simple observation, that there does exist such an adaptation of divine revelation to the moral faculty of man in its present disordered and enfeebled state. The Bible presents a high and fixed standard of moral truth, suited to correct those low and variable notions which, as all experience testifies, would otherwise have prevailed amongst mankind. As, on the one hand, it adapts itself to the moral faculty, by dealing with those truths which are suited to its nature; so also, on the other hand, it assists that faculty in its exercise, by disclosing to it facts or objects which were either originally beyond its range of vision, or which, at all events, it is unable to discover, in its present state of imperfection and disorder. Especially, it declares the true nature and character of God, which had been so lamentably obscured in the apprehension of mankind; and it proclaims aloud, not only the existence of a future state of immortality and of retribution, but also the future reunion and glorification of soul and body at the resurrection of the dead.

Further. The light of revelation, as it has actually been vouchsafed to us, is found to meet the disorder of the conscience in its reflexive or judicial capacity. It not only adapts itself to the existence of such a principle, and confirms the sense of guilt so far as the conscience may already have entertained it, but it awakens that sense when dormant; it makes accusations, and brings home convictions, when the conscience may have become seared or deadened. It is a voice without calling to the slumberer within, arousing him, and bringing him to himself, and to a sense of his own condition. It is found, indeed, that conscience within gives a response to the accusation from without; and yet it is nevertheless true, both that the accusation is distinct from the inward working of the mind, and that such a distinct and outward force was needed in order to set the mind at work. The charge of sin, especially in its prime element of ungodliness, by which Scripture arouses and sharpens a sense of guilt, is one which, when made, conscience itself knows and feels to be most true; while yet that same conscience may have been so far disordered and corrupted, that of itself it would never have become sensible of the nature and amount of guilt contracted. But

God has not left us to ourselves in this matter. "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin," (Gal. iii. 22.); it has shewn, also, that sin lies not merely in the outward act of transgression, but, chiefly, in the perverseness of the will occasioned by the inward disposition of the heart: and, in proportion as we receive the attestations of the word, we find that our own consciences recognise the guilt and enormity of our transgressions, at once in principle and in act. Revelation shows, moreover, not only that our sinfulness exists, but that the fault of it is our own; that our sin is not chargeable upon God, or upon matter, or upon any external agent or principle of evil, but that it is chargeable upon ourselves. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.)

Lastly. While the Law informs and arouses the conscience, the Gospel gives it peace, and, with peace, new power. We find that revelation, as it has been given to us, contains an announcement which is adapted at once to convert the sense of guilt into penitence, to reinstate the moral sentiment in its proper exercise of authority, and to influence the will in the direction of godliness and virtue by the presentation of an adequate, and indeed the only adequate, motive, which is,

supreme love to God. Revelation declares,—what the mind of man could not of itself discover, and what a sense of guilt would remove, if possible, more completely than ever from our view,—the love of God to us; his infinite benevolence towards ourselves, not merely as the creatures of his hand, but as his fallen, sinful, creatures. It discloses to us the great fact of redemption, and the wonderful person and work of the Redeemer. And in this way it at once sets before us a personal Being, who challenges our unbounded confidence and our supreme affection, and proposes an object of pursuit, such as may well excite our most intense desire. Christianity proclaims to us the fact of a new and additional obligation,—an obligation to God as our Redeemer; it exhibits to us a relation which, when once apprehended, is recognised by the inner man as involving the duties of grateful love and of absolute submission. In a word, the Gospel is designed and adapted to bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. x. 5.)

It is this proclamation of redemption which completes the adaptation of revealed religion, considered as a discovery of truth, to those deep necessities which natural religion, although able to announce, is wholly incompetent to sup-

ply. And "that, indeed, is a most interesting adjustment between Moral Philosophy and the Christian Theology, which is represented to us by the unresolved difficulties of the one science, and the reduction which is made of these difficulties in the other. The one science lands us in the difficulty; and by the other alone it is that we are extricated. The one presents us with the case; but, for the solution of it, we must recur to a higher calculus, to an instrument of more powerful discovery, and of fuller revelation. The one starts a question which it cannot of itself untie; and the other furnishes the satisfactory response to it. The desideratum of the former meets with the doctrine of the latter; and it is this frequent adjustment, as of a mould to a counterpart die; it is this close and manifold adaptation between the wants of nature and the overtures of a professed revelation; it is this fitting of the supernal application to the terrestrial subject upon which it is laid; it is the way, more especially, in which the disruption between heaven and earth has been restored, and the frightful chasm that sin had made on the condition and prospects of our species, is wholly repaired to all who will, through the completeness of an offered Saviour; it is this mingled



harmony of the greater and lesser lights, which gives evidence that both have been kindled by the same hand, and that it is He who put the candle which glimmers so feebly in my heart, it is He also who poured the noonday effulgence of Christianity around me." (*Chalmers, Nat. Theol.* book v. chap. 4.)

We must not, indeed, imagine that, in order to our spiritual life and well-being, the presentation of objective truth, or the making of an outward revelation, is all in all. The truth is but the means by which our faculties are wrought upon; the agent who wields the instrument is the Holy Spirit. Under the light of natural religion, if that alone had been needed and accorded, the real life of our inner man could have proceeded only from the Holy Spirit as its author; and his office is no less indispensable amidst the higher revelations of the Gospel. These revelations are the new instrument with which he works upon the heart of man fallen and redeemed. The Gospel is the truth by means of which He sanctifies. It is in the use of this appropriate instrumentality,—but still it is by Him,—that the moral faculty is enlightened, the moral sentiment is restored to the exercise of its rightful power, the affections are won, and

the will is converted to God. He works more powerfully with the Gospel than without it; and the Christian dispensation is preeminently the dispensation of the Spirit.

And even as to the process of sanctification as it is carried on within the heart, we still recognise the force of an enlightened conscience, and the force of moral motives, as a kind of interior mechanism by which the Holy Spirit works. He deals with man according to the constitution of his nature; and therefore, in renewing the human will, He operates by means of those faculties which were originally appointed to control it. The Spirit operates by the truth, as by an outward instrument, upon the intellectual and moral powers; and then again by those very powers, as by an inward instrument, with which He controls the affections and desires, and thus excites and regulates the will.

Hence, then, it becomes manifest that, on many accounts, an intelligent acquaintance with the true principles of Moral Philosophy and Natural Religion forms a valuable aid towards the right understanding and due appreciation of Christianity. The more thoroughly we are conversant with sound ethical principles, and with

the various details of our duty as individuals and as members of society, so far as these things are capable of being discovered or recognised by the light of nature, the more shall we be sensible of our deep need of a remedy such as only the Gospel announces, and the better shall we be prepared to profit by that illumination, guidance, and power of the Holy Spirit, working with the instrumentality of the divine message of redemption, whereby our spirits may be exalted to a degree of moral purity and perfection, which they would have been otherwise for ever unable to attain. Conscience, or rather, as it is sometimes called in Scripture, the heart, the mind, the spirit,—enlightened and vivified by communion with God,—and influenced by its perception of the relations which arise out of the facts of redemption, in addition to those which exist by virtue of creation, or, in other words, guided and controlled by faith,—becomes the seat of that moral life and vigour, which alone, in its perfection, can vindicate for any of the sons of men the character of those by whom the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

J. E. R.

CHELTENHAM,  
*February, 1856.*

A

# MANUAL OF ETHICS.

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## CHAP. I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY, or Ethics, is the science which investigates the motives and consequences of our actions, relatively to God, to ourselves, and to society. It stands in the relation of a sister science to Metaphysics, which takes cognizance of the intellectual faculties and their functions..

Admitting, for convenience' sake, the classification of the mental powers into intellectual and moral, the latter class are those which properly form the object of Ethics. They are also called the *active* faculties, not because the intellectual are not also active, but because these moral powers especially influence and prompt the actions which affect our own happiness and that of society.

The *end* of this science (that is, the design we purpose of it) is *virtue*, which may be defined here to be the conscientious discharge of moral obligations.

This branch of philosophic speculation would appear, more than any other, to have arisen from

the circumstance of man's composite nature, from the combination in one being of spiritual and animal faculties and propensities, and from the antagonism between the actual position of human nature and its obviously legitimate destination, as suggested by its higher faculties.

The philosophers of Greece, at so early a period as five-and-a-half centuries before the Christian era, had begun to investigate, according to their opportunities, the phenomena of Psychology and Metaphysics—the nature and origin of the human soul, the functions of the intellect, the sources of human knowledge, &c.; but the first, so far as we know, who devoted his attention to the anomalies of the moral condition of man, was Socrates. Observing the degradation of human nature by its animal passions and evil propensities, its selfishness, falsehood, and cruelty; and the evident adaptation of its more noble faculties to a state of happiness and dignity; feeling also an instinctive tendency to and admiration of that loftier destiny; he sought to lay down certain laws, by which men might be guided, as rational and accountable beings, to the pursuit of objects directly related to their spiritual nature, and to such a subjection of the lower faculties as should render them subservient and useful to the higher. “He was the first,” says Cicero, “who invited Philosophy down from

heaven, gave her a home in cities, introduced her into our domestic life, and led her to speculate on life and manners, and on all things good and evil." (*Tuscul. Disp.* l. v. c. 4.) And the lessons of Socrates, communicated to us by his two most distinguished pupils, Xenophon and Plato, shew that his ideas of the nature, position, and duties of man, approach more closely, than one might at first suppose possible, to the standard of Christian Ethics. In the systems of all the successors of Socrates, this branch of science occupies a more or less prominent position.

Plato, who reverently followed his gentle and sublime master, regarded man as a being endowed with spiritual and physical faculties, of which the former, in virtue of their higher functions and objects, were designed to predominate; and, at the same time, surrounded by material influences and accidents, through which the inner light was unable to send a ray sufficiently strong to guide his steps. As a solution of the enigma presented by these conditions of existence, he took a bold and poetical view of the human soul: his theory was that of an antenatal existence, a past immortality of the soul, in which it had been surrounded by more congenial circumstances, and to which, after the parenthesis of this mortal life, it should return again. Accordingly he taught, that all our intellectual acquirements during this

material existence are no more than so many revivals of impressions previously received; so that, where we imagine ourselves to be learning, we are merely recollecting. And there are certain illusions occasionally flashing upon all minds of high order and acute sensibility, that would seem forcibly to suggest some such idea; when some dim and distant reminiscences, shadowy and fleeting in proportion to the faintness of the original impression, appear to recall the scenes and feelings of another life. Plato's most eminent pupil was Aristotle. His moral system, embodied in the Essay addressed to his son Nicomachus, is founded on the recognition of a principle within us, an instinctive moral sentiment, or intuitive perception, to which, irrespectively of external circumstances, we may always safely entrust our choice between good and evil. He taught, that every excess or deficiency in the operation of any of our faculties or propensities, is an evil; and that every virtue (or propriety) is therefore a mean between two extremes; that fortitude, for instance, is a mean between ferocity and cowardice; and generosity the medium between selfishness and profusion. His axiom was μεσότης ἔστιν ἡ ἀρετή; and, therefore, although he pronounced virtue to be a good, intrinsically and independently of utility, (in the grosser and narrower sense of the term,) he recognised the adventitious

favours of fortune, physical superiority, &c. as elements in the perfection of good (*summum bonum*), or rational happiness. It was this view of happiness; as consisting in the full legitimate and evenly-balanced enjoyment and exercise of all the human faculties, that Epicurus adopted, and not the system of sensual indulgences with which his degenerate successors desecrated his name. His religious theory was, that "it is not impiety to deny the gods of the vulgar; but impious to apply vulgar opinions to the gods."

The Stoics sought to reconcile the anomaly of man's moral position, by classifying all considerations into those which are not in our own power, and those which are; and, as the practice of virtue is that only over which we can have any control, understood its observance to constitute the perfection of good. Like the ancient Hebrew sect of the Essenes, they ignored the principle of expediency, or yielding to circumstances, or compromising with necessity; and maintained, in all cases, that "the right" should never yield to external influences or accidents; nor the consent of the mind to any thing short of absolute certainty; differing in these respects from the Academic sect, who recognised both expediency and probability.

All the ancient philosophers appear to have felt the imperfection and uncertainty of merely human systems, and the want of some revelation of the



eventful destiny of man, and of the purpose of his creation. From this perplexity arose many ingenious and fanciful, and some highly poetical and romantic hypotheses, by which attempts were made to find a compensation for the anomalous condition of human nature, and to reconcile it to an ideal standard of beauty and harmony, such as Divine Revelation exhibits to our faith and hope, as a reality to come.

Of these conjectures, the most remarkable and imaginative was Pantheism, which commanded an extensive assent in the ancient world, and which is to be found developed not only in the essays of the successors of Plato, but also in the Vedas of the Indians, the Jewish Kabbala, the Vendidad (the book of Zoroaster<sup>a</sup>), and, to some extent, in the writings of Philo Judæus. This doctrine, which will be found fully and beautifully illustrated by Virgil in the latter portion of the sixth book of the *Æneid*, is more familiarly known as the theory of emanation; that is, of emanations from one great central spirit into all living things, constituting the vital principle of each, and returning to the original source, on the dissolution of the material organizations in which they had resided.

The great merit of the ancient philosophers

<sup>a</sup> The Greek name for the Persian philosopher Zerdusht. The date of his era is uncertain.

was, that they deduced from their accessible data, conclusions of so correct and sublime a character as those collected by Xenophanes, Plato, Aristotle, and above all by Cicero, who made the nearest approach to the system of Christianity itself. That they should have failed in completing a system by answering the questions which they suggested, is not less natural than that they should have groped in darkness after physical truths, without the aid of modern optical science. Revelation is to Ethics what the Telescope is to Astronomy. They went as far as men with their materials could have proceeded. From the laws and arrangements of external nature, from the moral constitution of man, and from the mutual adaptation of these two sets of phenomena, they deduced the existence of one supreme Deity, and the spiritual and immortal essence of the soul: and on these evidences there are some arguments and illustrations in the Essays of Aristotle "on the Vital Principle," and of Cicero "on the Nature of the Gods," which it is not too much to pronounce worthy of a Bridgewater Treatise. It may be also observed, that when they speak of "the Gods," they merely conform to the popular superstition of their time; and that it is only when they occasionally use the singular number, that they give expression to their own private belief. In Ethics, their guide was that instinctive

principle of justice and honour, which some modern philosophers, with all the light of Christianity falling on their path, have perversely ignored; and in Psychology they followed the suggestions of that restlessness of ambition, that yearning and longing after nobler and higher things, which nothing but the pride and grandeur of immortality can satisfy. The ethical systems of Aristotle and Cicero, surviving the vicissitudes of time, still shine out "from the depth of ages" like fixed stars, and worthily hold their place among the works of Christian morality, as subjects of academic study.

The mental and moral philosophy of the ancient Jews, though ante-Christian, cannot of course be regarded otherwise than as a revelation. It consists of the moral code of the Decalogue, the most concise and comprehensive ever framed; the political institutions of Moses; the ethical teaching of the Book of Job; the lessons of keen worldly prudence and mental discipline in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; and the lofty devotional sentiment of the Psalms; and these, together with the cosmogony of Genesis—to which, when correctly understood, all the once dreaded discoveries of modern science have only contributed a strong collateral evidence—form a body of philosophy as much more important, as it is more complete and authoritative, than any

speculations, however beautiful, of heathen wisdom and genius.

Here it may be interesting to add, that the two ancient Chinese philosophers, Confucius and Meucius<sup>b</sup>, worked out by their own reflections, and have transmitted through more than two thousand years, principles and precepts which, but for the impossibility of intercourse, one would be inclined to regard as the reflection of a light shining farther west. The cardinal virtues of the system of Confucius are, filial piety, universal charity, impartial justice, conformity to conventional ceremonies, moderation in emotions and desires, and pure truth and sincerity—and still more remarkable, that of *feeling alike toward others and toward self*. Meucius, whose views were at once profound and practical, inculcated some politically ethical truths, which Europeans have but recently begun to recognise; such as, that political oppression demoralizes a nation, and ensnares men to the commission of crime; that

<sup>b</sup> *Kong-foo-tse*, whose name was Latinized by the early Jesuit Missionaries into Confucius, was born in the year 604 B.C., and was therefore the cotemporary of Pythagoras, became at one time the prime minister of the King of Loo, and died in poverty and neglect at an advanced age. *Maug-tse*, whose name was similarly altered, was born about 374 B.C. It may be worth mentioning, that the system of admission to all public employments by examination, has prevailed for many generations in China.

kings should share their enjoyments with their subjects; that the people are the original source of legitimate sovereignty; that tax-payers should be many and tax-eaters few; that national education is the most efficient system of police; and various other maxims of like tendency. These two men may be respectively called the Aristippus and the Socrates of the East. Confucius closely resembled the former in the graceful versatility with which he accommodated himself to all elevations and depressions of external circumstances; while Meucius was the exact counterpart of the latter in the simplicity, candour, and boldness of his words, his disregard of all artificial demarcations of rank, and even in his interrogative method of instructing and confuting. In the philosophy of Zoroaster, the most remarkable doctrine was that of the two conflicting principles of good and evil, afterwards adopted by the Manicheans. His object was to reconcile the existence of evil with a belief in Divine benevolence, and to reform the religion of the Magi. His system recognised no temples, and his moral precepts, or "*oracles*," closely resemble those of Plato.

Psychology, Metaphysics, and Ethics, regarded as distinct subjects of investigation, are interwoven at so many points of contact, that in any treatise, historical or speculative, on their rela-

tions, it is impossible altogether to disengage them. As the following chapters, however, are to be devoted especially to a popular exposition of the last, it will be sufficient to observe that, as reason must adjudicate upon the motives and consequences of our actions,—and that, as those motives are the feelings, emotions, and desires which result from the connection of spirit with matter,—it will be necessary occasionally to allude to some topics of Psychology, and especially to those several adaptations and mutual relations of the mind and the heart which make up our mental and moral constitution.

It may be observed, in conclusion, that the study of these phenomena is necessarily one of the most important and eternally interesting that can engage our attention. The cultivation of our intellectual, and still more especially of our moral, faculties must be regarded, upon every principle of analogy, as the most indispensable preparation for the life to come; because the exercise of our moral faculties and benevolent sympathies, though in this life only rivalling in gratification that of the intellect, will doubtless surpass it in importance and enjoyment in a future existence. It has also, even here, a more practical value, inasmuch as our temporal happiness depends mainly upon the conduct of our intercourse with human society. And, we might

infer the eternity of virtue as the condition of our future life, if not from the clear evidences, which surround us, of the moral attributes of the Deity; at least from the fact, that, while our vicious inclinations and evil passions exhaust and destroy themselves by indulgence, our benevolent properties, on the contrary, draw new life and energy from exercise.

#### QUESTIONS.

What is Moral Philosophy?

What are the object and end of this science?

Why are the moral faculties called *active*?

What is the definition of *Virtue*?

How far back can we trace the cultivation of mental science?

Who was the first moral philosopher?

What considerations may have led him to adopt this study?

What does Cicero say of Socrates relatively to this subject?

How do we learn the precepts of Socrates?

What was Plato's view of the moral nature of man?

What was his peculiar psychological doctrine?

What did he teach respecting the memory?

Where do we find Aristotle's moral system?

Upon what principle in our nature was it founded?

What was his theory of *Virtue*?

According to Aristotle, what are the constituents of the *summum bonum*?

What was the theory of Epicurus?

What were the doctrines of the Stoics, respecting *Virtue*,  
*Expediency*, and *Probability*?

What sect among the ancient Jews coincided in these opinions?

**What was the great deficiency of the heathen systems?**

**What is the doctrine of Pantheism?**

**Where is it explained?**

**What analogy may be traced between the disabilities of the heathen philosophers in Ethics, and their wants in Physical Science?**

**Do you suppose that Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, believed in the popular religion of their time?**

**Of what does the philosophy of the Jews consist?**

**Who were the Chinese philosophers?**

**What is remarkable in the Ethics of Confucius?**

**What was his real name, and when did he live?**

**What are the political doctrines of his successor?**

**What Greek philosophers did they respectively resemble?**

**Do you know any thing of the philosophy of Zoroaster?**

**How is Moral Philosophy connected with Metaphysics and Psychology?**

**From what considerations may we infer the importance of Moral Science?**



## CHAP. II.

### THEORIES OF ETHICS.

ALL the moral philosophers, who have ever undertaken to teach human society the duties required of responsible and rational beings, to themselves, to society, and to the Deity, have been sufficiently unanimous in specifying what actions are virtuous and vicious; but, to the question, *why* they are respectively such, every eminent philosopher will most probably be found to return some peculiar answer of his own, and to account for the difference between *what is*, and *what ought to be*, by some favourite theory. Of these theories, the most remarkable that have been suggested in modern times are the following.

Adam Smith adopted and promulgated what may be called the theory of *sympathy*; maintaining, that we judge of the propriety of our own actions, only by recording our impressions of the character of similar actions when performed by others. It is true that we do estimate actions in this way, and that sympathy is often useful as a criterion of the moral quality of actions, although it is not the foundation on which morality rests. But it is also true, that few of us apply such

a standard to ourselves; because our passions interfere with the impartiality of self-examination, and prevent our seeing ourselves as others see us; and, even if it were not so, our ignorance of the motives of others must contribute in some degree to an imperfect decision. Here we can detect one use of reason in ethical questions, where it is necessary to appreciate intentions and consequences, and to discriminate, for instance, between the several motives under which a judge, a soldier, and an assassin, take away life.

The theory of *mutual convenience*, maintained by Mandeville especially, teaches, that we recognise the rectitude of actions only in their conformity to the principle of sacrificing some portion of our own gratification to the convenience of others, in order that an equivalent concession may be made to ourselves. This is the principle of general rules; and that on which all political institutions are founded, which require each individual to resign a certain portion of his own liberty and possessions for the security of those of the community.

The theory of *utility*, originally propounded by Hobbes<sup>a</sup>, was subsequently advocated by Hume,

<sup>a</sup> Perhaps we should rather call the theory of Hobbes that of *self-interest*—that useful to ourselves. Hence his theory has been called the *selfish system*, or *simply utilitarian*, while that of Hume and Paley has been denominated the system of

and to some extent by Dr. Paley. In this view our actions are virtuous only so far as they are useful. Hume subsequently modified the proposition, by associating with the essential utility a feeling of approbation, and thus virtually abandoning his original position; while Dr. Paley, ignoring altogether the operation of conscience, substitutes the Divine Will, as an arbitrary fixed law; and obedience to it, as the course which reason and experience together demonstrate to be the most effectual in promoting the happiness of the human race. This theory of Ethics is open to an objection common to the foregoing theories; that they degrade the basis of morality by descending from the high ground of an intuitive moral sense. It may be also met by arguments peculiarly applicable to itself. 1. It implies a process of reasoning similar to that which we see, in other cases, leading

expediency, or general utility. "It appears that Paley meant to propose the will of God as the rule or obligation of morals, and utility only as a criterion or guide; though it must be confessed that his language is liable to much misconstruction, and is somewhat at variance with itself. The real objection to the doctrine of Paley lies, I apprehend, in his unqualified rejection of the supreme authority of conscience, and in the mental operation which he substitutes in its place, viz a circuitous process of reasoning in each individual respecting the entire and ultimate expediency of actions." *Abercrombie, Moral Feelings*, part 3. Appendix, §. 1.

to different courses of action in men equally competent to decide and investigate. When we find, for instance, that statesmen and lawyers, and theologians, deduce different conclusions from the same set of premises, we cannot expect that syllogisms will guide us infallibly through ethical questions. 2. It involves the possession of an experience sufficient to determine the consequences of actions, and which a whole human life may not enable one to acquire; whereas, if one recognise the moral sentiment, "he has," as Bishop Butler says, "the rule of right within; and all that is wanting is, that he honestly attend to it." 3. It is founded on the principle, that nothing is right or wrong in itself, but only in its relations, and overlooks the distinction drawn by Professor Mills—that actions are useful because they are virtuous, not virtuous because they are useful; but virtuous because they accord with eternal principles; or, in the words of Cicero, "what is expedient is not necessarily virtuous, but what is virtuous is always expedient."

A theory of Ethics, founded upon such a basis as Phrenology, may not probably command very general attention; but, granting, for the moment, the security of the foundation, the superstructure raised upon it is consistent and complete in itself. It teaches us, that our moral faculties act, like so many senses, through material organs,

the development of which indicates the intensity of the action; that these are influenced on the one side by our intellectual faculties, and on the other by our animal propensities, all which have their visible cerebral organs; and that, when a due balance and compensation is maintained among all these functions, our actions will be in accordance with the original design of Providence; and therefore virtuous, and consequently conducive to human happiness. It follows, then, that as the relative development of those several organs indicates every obliquity of the moral balance, it is in our power by discipline to restore its normal state; and that Providence has placed under our notice those external signs, in order that we may estimate, and correct, and improve, our moral constitution. The obvious inference from this theory is, that persons whom we should otherwise call *criminals*, are only *patients*; and indeed some such humane view of immorality as a disease is beginning to be generally entertained by those who neither know nor believe in Phrenology as a science, and to exercise a corresponding influence upon our criminal jurisprudence.

We naturally infer, that the brain is the seat and organ of our spiritual part, from the fact of its being the centre of the nervous system; and we see that the largest, or rather the heaviest, brain is, *cæteris paribus*, the most powerful;

but, unfortunately for the doctrine that all our faculties and propensities act through *separate* organs *externally* visible, it is found that neither the internal surface of the skull, (which consists of two parallel plates,) nor the surface of the brain, corresponds in shape to the external configuration of the bone; at least, not with sufficient exactness to confirm the axioms of the science.

The only theories remaining to be considered, are those founded on the principle illustrated in the preceding chapter, and adopted by Reid, Stewart, Butler, Abercrombie, and numerous other popular philosophers. The first is, that virtue consists in a conformity to the eternal truth and fitness of things, the intuitive perception of which is conscience, which recognises and approves virtue for its own intrinsic beauty, irrespectively of those consequences which nevertheless do follow\*. The recommendations of this theory, when compared with the others, are, the uniformity of the conclusion drawn from the moral sentiment by all philosophers, Christian and Pagan, who have recognised it; that, in the absence of revelation, it was the only guide of the ante-christian moral-

\* "Est quiddam, quod suâ vi nos alliciat ad sese, non emolumento captans aliquo, sed trahens suâ dignitate, quod genus virtus, scientia, veritas est." *Cicero*, de Inv. 2. c. 52.

ists; that it addresses itself to our desires and affections, which are also instincts, and invariable in their operations; that the recognition of some such principle is necessary to complete the analogy between our mental and physical natures, the latter of which is influenced by love and perception of external and visible beauty; that it dictates a higher and more spiritual motive of action than any utilitarian principle of duty; and, especially, that it is recognised and addressed by St. Paul.

Dr. Whewell's theory combines reason with conscience, as a necessary element in our perception of right and wrong; in order to meet the objections urged on the one side, against the theory of utility (or pleasure, or expediency) as being too sensual, and on the other, against that of the moral sentiment (or conscience) as viewing actions not sufficiently absolutely, and uniformly. The combination of these two elements he calls "common sense;" and to this he assigns the most accurate appreciation of human actions.

The advocates of another theory proceed to a still more subtle distinction, and maintain, that we regard every action in three different lights; the moral, the æsthetic, and the sympathetic. In more familiar words, we either approve, or admire, or love certain actions, accordingly as they appear to us to be either just, or appropriate,

or amiable. Thus, by assuming a strictly stoical mood, we may approve the conduct of the elder Brutus, and that of Walter Lynch, the Warden of Galway; we can both approve and admire such conduct as that of Judge Burgoyne, or George Washington; while we can approve, admire, and love the tender heroism of Helen Walker, (Jeannie Deans,) of Damon and Pythias, and of Pætus and Arria. These distinctions suggest to us the difference somewhere marked between virtue and merit; of which the latter implies the sacrifice to duty of some strong propensity or temptation. It may be observed, however, that Cicero identifies them, when he defines "the virtue of a good man" to be that "which is beneficial to others, while it involves trouble, or danger, or, at least, no profit to himself." (*De Orat.* ii. 85.)

Here may be noticed the diversity of opinion respecting the classification of those faculties which the spiritual element of our being either possesses exclusively in itself, or manifests through its union with material bodies.

By some authorities, the understanding (or reasoning and comprehensive faculties) is regarded as essentially and originally distinct from the moral faculty (or the will). These faculties are respectively called *solitary* and *social*; and the latter is further subdivided into the desires and



the affections, which constitute the motives of all actions, and relate respectively to ourselves and to society, differing in this from the understanding, which is purely reflexive, percipient, and speculative. These are all evidently distinct from the passions, such as sensual desires, fear, sorrow, hatred, anger, jealousy, which are participated by the inferior animals, and are purely sensuous; but it may be doubted, whether our loftier desires, aspirations, and affections,—such as love, friendship, gratitude, admiration, honourable ambition, and emulation,—can be supposed to flow from a source essentially different from that of the analytic and synthetic powers, memory, imagination, and that high-toned development of them all, which we know as the creative faculty or genius. It would appear—and this is the view taken by several modern philosophers—that the spiritual essence, (or soul, or intellect, which Aristotle calls *ἐντελέχεια*), though one and undivided, acts in different directions, and exhibits different results accordingly; that, for instance, when it ascertains facts and relations, we call it reason; when it approves or condemns, we call it judgment; when it warns or advises, it is conscience; when it finds a joy in the society of congenial beings, it is love; when it recalls the impressions of the past, it is memory; and when it forms new combinations, and contrasts, and

resemblances of actual and familiar things, and ennobles and hallows them with a beauty of impassioned truth reflected from itself, it is the spirit of poetry or genius. This view, also, is of the two the more accordant with the known economy of the creation, in which we find one agent—such as the atmosphere, or sun-light—simultaneously performing several different functions. Even in our own bodily organization, we can find no organ or member which does not subserve a variety of purposes, many of which the unscientific never know, until the accident of mutilation proves the manifold inconveniences of its loss.

On this principle, we may perhaps regard the moral sentiment itself, as being but one phase of that instinctive love of the beautiful, which comprises its moral as well as its physical manifestations, and dictates our aspirations after the ideal in both. Thus Plato compares the beauty of virtue to that of a woman, which, if seen, would captivate all hearts:—and poets, painters, and sculptors have personified the abstractions of all virtues and sentiments under forms of material beauty, imparting to them a perfection which seems unreal amid the deformities of actual things, and clothed them in that atmosphere of gentle sadness which hangs round every ideal conception of loveliness.

## QUESTIONS.

- What was Adam Smith's theory of Ethics?  
What is the obvious objection to this view?  
How is Reason useful in Ethics?  
Explain the theory of Mutual Convenience?  
By whom has the theory of Utility been adopted?  
What are the three objections to which it is liable?  
Quote Cicero and Professor Mills.  
What theory has been founded upon Phrenology?  
How does Physiology bear upon this theory?  
By whom is the theory of Conscience advocated?  
Can you briefly recapitulate the arguments in support of this doctrine?  
What is Dr. Whewell's theory?  
What distinction may be drawn between the moral, the æsthetic, and sympathetic aspects of actions?  
How may *Virtue* and *Merit* be distinguished?  
How are they estimated by Cicero?  
How are our spiritual faculties classified?  
Are those distinctions necessary?  
On what principle may all those faculties be identified?  
Is it possible that there may be a closer relation than analogy between our feelings for moral and for material beauty?

## CHAPTER III.

### CONSCIENCE.

existence and authority of that moral faculty, it is variously called, innate axiom, or revelation of nature, or moral sentiment, to which mention has been made above, has been a matter of the earnest discussion among moral philosophers. In the ancients, whose only guide it was, it was regarded as one of those superior instincts which man obeys in virtue of his spiritual and immortal nature; one of those instincts, of which a second impels him to believe in and adore some superior being, and a third prompts him to anticipate another life, in which all the wrongs and deficiencies and anomalies of this will be adjusted, compensated, and reconciled.

The arguments against the existence of this innate feeling may be thus briefly stated.

1. We can observe, that some actions which are regarded as crimes at one time and place—such as cruelty, treachery, revenge, suicide—are applauded as virtues under other circumstances; from which the obvious inference seems to be, that there exists in the mind no uniform standard of propriety.

To this it may be replied, that, wherever popular approbation has encouraged the commission of that which highly civilized communities denounce as criminal, the fact is, that not those particular actions, but the principles or sentiments from which they have been supposed to result,—such as fortitude, perseverance, patriotism,—were the real objects of commendation. It will be found, that all men have every where agreed in commending the same *names* of virtues, and differ only about the true significations of those names. It may be observed also, that all civilized and cultivated men are alike unanimous as to the distinctions of virtues and vices: and that to argue from the differences between them and savages, is not more logical than it would be to deny the instinctive perception of material beauty, because some barbarians admire tattooed faces and blackened teeth; or, to deny the innate sentiment of religion, because some men have worshipped and do worship idols and pageants, and have believed or still believe in heaven as an epicurean garden, a valhala, or a harem.

2. It has been said, that the influence of habit is sufficient to account for our preference of some actions over others. Finding them useful in promoting our happiness, and facilitating our intercourse with society, we are led gradually to approve and recommend them. To this we may

answer, that the same argument might be employed to prove that human beings use particular articles of food, because habit (or experience) teaches that they are nutritious, rather than because they have been originally adapted by Providence to their constitutions.

3. Another objection, strongly insisted on by Dr. Paley, is, that "it is not good logic to assume certain principles as so many dictates, impulses, and instincts of nature; and then to draw conclusions from these as to the rectitude or wrongness of actions, independently of the tendency of such actions." This argument presents all the difficulty of proving by actual demonstration any proposition, the truth of which depends on an appeal to the consciousness of every cultivated and sensitive mind. We assume an instinctive perception of external beauty, because we derive an enjoyment from statues, pictures, poetry, music, and all the phases, animate and inanimate, of symmetry and harmony, by which we are surrounded, and we cannot convince those who disclaim such emotions, of their existence in ourselves. No more can we prove to one who beholds unmoved the noble and generous actions of others, and feels within himself no impulse to emulation, that we derive from the contemplation of them a gratification irrespective of any calculation of consequences. It is possible indeed that

these two faculties may be but different functions of the same instinct, of which the external agency is merely the type and visible illustration of the internal.

4. By far the most formidable objection to the theory is, that so many persons around us in society act as if conscience were only some beautiful and delusive dream of romance, like the Platonic antitypes, or "the castle of truth;" and are impeded by no compunction, and punished by no remorse. Here we can only oppose the observation, that the moral condition of such persons is abnormal. Such a moral state is compared by more than one philosopher to the derangement of a watch which fails to measure time notwithstanding the presence of a regulator, because that part of the machinery itself requires the adjustment and control of a sun-dial. It may perhaps be still more appropriately illustrated by its analogy to a musical instrument, of which the strings are all relaxed, every note flat, and every combination of sounds a discord; while the ear, that should preserve and regulate its harmony, is dull and defective through want of discipline and cultivation. More plainly, while we regard conscience as a touch-stone, we must remember that its discriminating power admits of a perpetually progressive refinement: it is, like our perception of physical beauty, tran-

scendental: every model of excellence suggests the possibility of a still more ideal perfection: and as, from its folded germ, it can grow to a partial maturity, amid the influences of mental and religious culture; so, from this point it is capable of a still broader expansion, the nearer it approaches its destination in a still more congenial climate. Virtue is the native atmosphere of the soul, which derives from the contemplation of moral excellence a pleasure like that which comes upon the wanderer and the exile, when some accidental sound or passing view recalls the associations or scenery of his distant home. But such glimpses offer themselves to many minds feebly and indistinctly. "It is not," says Dr. Chalmers, "that every man obeys the dictates of conscience, but that every man feels he ought to obey them." "Though conscience may not be a sovereign *de facto*, she is always so *de jure*." Hence arises that insensibility to the feeling of remorse naturally attendant upon every outrage of the moral sentiment, from which Dr. Paley deduces an apparently strong argument, observing, that "such remorse may be borne with, and if the sinner choose to compensate it by the pleasure of his transgression, the moral-instinct man has nothing to reply." We may however answer, that the fact of the sinner having to bear with it,



is some indication of its existence; and that it never fails, in the long run, to come in such a shape, that the sinner *cannot* bear with it. No man, who has seen or read much of the progress of crime, can be ignorant, that conscience, besides being our monitor and our judge, is also, in the end, the executioner of those who have longest and most successfully stifled its reproaches. None are so hardened and degraded by long perseverance in crime, that remorse will not at last seize them in her avenging grasp; or that they will not be visited by those lucid intervals of agonizing memory, which come, like flashes cleaving the storm, to show them the precipices on whose edge they stand.

The strongest argument for its existence may be stated thus: Revelation teaches us, that certain opposite courses of conduct are respectively enjoined and interdicted by the Highest Authority: we presume, from analogy, that this distinction is not arbitrary, or a mere test of obedience, but a portion of a connected and uniform system: we see and know that it conduces to the happiness of mankind, and must have some foundation in the eternal and (to us hitherto) mysterious nature of things; and it is but natural to assume, that, as accountable beings, we are so constituted as to anticipate to some extent—and heathen philosophers have so anti-

cipated—the teaching of revelation ; in the same manner as we instinctively feel a strong and inextinguishable presentiment of immortality, independently of the explicit promises of Scripture. Comparing this feeling with others recognised as instincts, we find it presenting all the characteristics of an innate principle, both in the uniformity of its suggestions in all similar circumstances, and in the universality of its influence. We have seen, for instance, the philosophers of Asiatic and European Greece, the sages of Persia and China, and the Christian moralists of our own time, all arriving at the same conclusions respecting moral obligations, and the supremacy of the spiritual over the sensual portion of our being ; while yet, if man were totally destitute of an instinctive moral faculty, no such books as their ethical treatises could have been ever produced : and we also find, that it is as impossible altogether to suppress the voice of conscience, as it has ever been to extinguish the sentiment of religion in some shape, or to establish a community of property. That it is a principle distinct, at least in its operation, though deriving some sanction and authority from reason or judgment, would be evident from the fact, that the intellectual and moral faculties are often developed separately, and almost exclusively, in different individuals. The most brilliant intellect

has been sometimes found in combination with an extreme degree of moral depravity and hardness of heart; and, in the contrivance and execution of the most appalling crimes, there has often been evinced a power of mind, which, if honestly and properly employed, could scarcely have failed to attain happiness and distinction. The difference of the functions of the two faculties is delicately touched by Aristotle in the observation, that the action of the one may confine itself to theories, while that of the other must exhibit itself in practice.

The position assigned to conscience in the Christian Revelation is that of a monitor and a witness, ever awake and ever present, and of a law sufficient for those who have no other. "They who are without a law," writes St. Paul, "are a law unto themselves, their *consciences* bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing one another:" and again, "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart," (that is, commands a knowledge of our conscience,) "and knoweth all things."

Cicero's view of the nature and power of conscience may be compared with the loftiest conceptions of Christian moralists. "A law," he calls it, "coinciding with nature, (i. e. instinctive,) pervading all minds, consistent, and eternal, inviting to duty by its commands, and repelling

from wrong by its prohibitions. To the virtuous it addresses no command or prohibition in vain, while the vicious are unmoved by its warnings and exhortations. This law can neither be annulled nor superseded: no senate or people can dissolve it: no lawyer, no commentator can explain it away. It is not one law in Athens and another in Rome, nor different at different times; but the same law, eternal and unchangeable, extending to all nations and all ages. Of this law the author and giver is God." (*De Rep.* iii. 22.)

Bishop Butler, who insists upon its supremacy more emphatically than any other moralist, except Dr. Chalmers, speaks of it as a principle which, "if it had power as it has right, would govern the world:" but none have ever recognised its authority more fully than Socrates, whose spiritual monitor or "*dæmon*" was nothing more supernatural than a conscience developed by exercise into vigilance and vitality.

Like other instincts, this sentiment involves certain first truths; that is, truths not deduced from antecedent premises, but *felt* and believed intuitively; and these are, the estimate of the qualities of actions, as being just or unjust; the sense of their importance and tendency, as relating to God or man; and of their consequence in a future and retributive state of existence.

## QUESTIONS.

What place in their moral systems did the heathen philosophers assign to conscience?

What argument against its existence is founded on the apparent absence of an uniform standard?

To what objections is this argument exposed?

What is the principal argument advanced by Dr. Paley?

What reply does it admit?

How are we to account for the habitual callousness of some persons in matters of conscience?

How is the case illustrated by Dr. Chalmers?

Where does Dr. Paley seem to admit inadvertently the power of conscience?

What characteristics of an instinct does the moral faculty present when compared with other known instincts?

Why would you consider it a faculty distinct from judgment?

How does Aristotle distinguish them?

Where is conscience recognised in Scripture?

How does Cicero speak of it?

Can you quote Dr. Butler on the subject?

Why do you believe that Socrates was powerfully influenced by it?

What are the first truths dictated by it?

What do you mean by first truths?

## CHAPTER IV.

### MORAL FREEDOM.

THE question, whether we really enjoy freedom of will,—that is, whether we have the power to act otherwise than we do, in any given circumstances,—or are the victims of a necessity, which we can neither evade nor divert, must obviously be interesting to beings who seem to be treated by Providence and by each other as responsible agents; and the discussion of “Liberty, or Necessity,” has ever been a trial of dialectic skill among philosophers. As the estimation of our moral duties must be involved in the decision, it may be desirable to arrange a brief summary of the arguments employed on both sides.

The Necessitarians, or believers in necessity,—practically identical with fatalism,—of whom the most distinguished are Hobbes, Leibnitz, Hartley, Priestley, and to some extent Locke,—maintain, that the course of all events is unalterably fixed; that their succession is that of cause and effect; and, that the derangement of the most minute and trifling constituent of the series would involve it in a confusion not less pervading,

than the eccentricity of a planet would produce in the physical universe. The arguments in support of this theory are the following.

1. Every thing in existence that has a beginning must result from a cause. This must be granted, because, if any thing whatever could have come into existence without a cause, the whole universe might have been so produced. From this admission it must follow, that similar causes under similar circumstances must produce similar effects; because if the effects be different, the variation in the effect would be produced without a cause. If this be conceded, the plain inference from the two propositions is, that as the volitions (or acts of the will) must result, like all other effects, from causes, if the causes (or motives) be given, the volitions must be determinate; or, in plainer terms, the stronger of two motives must in all cases determine the act.

2. All men believe—no philosopher at least presumes to doubt—the omniscience of the Creator. All future events, near or distant, are known to Him; or rather—as He is also omnipotent—are ordained by Him from the beginning: that arrangement cannot be disturbed by human agency; and therefrom it follows, that it is absurd to affirm, at the same time, the omniscience of God, and man's freedom of will.

3. Confining our field of observation to

human life, we perceive that the actions of men depend on their natural dispositions, (or idiosyncrasies,) and their several educations. Of these, the latter commence and proceed to some extent, before we are able to alter or counteract their tendencies; while the former intimately affect our mental and bodily organizations, before we can subject them to any discipline. So far, therefore, as these two influences are beyond our personal control, our freedom of will is imperfect.

The sphere of life and grade of society into which we are severally born, are also circumstances quite as independent of any effort or choice of our own, as our birth itself; and still, upon these accidents depend the most of our means and opportunities of action. Our daily experience teaches us, that the position into which one man is born, frequently arms him with more power of utility or mischief than a hundred other men can possibly command; and that one man, with very moderate mental endowments and scarcely any effort, can attain the summit of his ambition; while another, though more highly gifted, must struggle through a life-long succession of obstacles, in order to place himself where the former stood at the outset of life.

To meet these arguments, the Libertarians—such as Bishop Butler, Law, Bryant, and Wol-



laston, and a large number of more recent writers—proceed to dissect them after this fashion.

1. It is readily admitted, that nothing which begins to exist or move, can do so independently of a cause; but, the human mind, being endowed with a power of estimating motives, and of being influenced by the stronger; and consequently of originating its own movements, (or volitions,) is itself, relatively to them, a cause; and this power was regarded by the ancient philosophers as a principal argument for our spiritual immortality. With respect to the uniform sequence of cause and effect, it may be said that the truth of the assertion can be only recognised as a theory; because, as a fact, we can never demonstrate, and can only approximate it<sup>a</sup>. It has never, to a moral certainty, happened in the longest human life, that a precisely similar combination of motives and circumstances has occurred twice: even in history, it is impossible to find two “situations” exactly and in all features parallel: the circumstances and dispositions of individuals present the same endless diversity as their physical

<sup>a</sup> Thus, in Mechanical Science, the axiom, “that a body set in motion will continue interminably to move in the same direction,” can only be established by approximation, (the duration of motion, and the resistance being inversely proportioned;) but no vacuum can be made sufficiently large, nor time sufficiently long, to demonstrate it.

conformations: and therefore the axiom, though granted as a theory, can have no reference to moral freedom. Again, the admission, that the stronger motive must ever determine the choice,—or, as the Necessitarians express it, that one cannot forbear to act under the motive which he feels to be the stronger,—involves nothing inconsistent with moral liberty, which Locke defines to be, “a power in any agent to do or to forbear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind.” It frequently happens that we are suspended between the equal attractions of two conflicting motives, like a piece of iron between two magnets, until some slight *momentum* destroys the balance. We are often distracted between passion and reason; that is, between a smaller immediate advantage and a greater prospective benefit: those inducements will act differently on different minds, and at different times on the same mind; but, whichever motive may urge to action, is, for the time, the stronger: so that, to assert that we always yield to the stronger motive, is only to describe us as rational beings. Here, a distinction is drawn between *practical* and *metaphysical* liberty: of which the latter is denied, as being the power to form opposite determinations in similar situations, which, it may be observed, is inconsistent with the attribute of reason. It is possible that one may act under

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1. What are the functions of the following?  
 a. to store information  
 b. to provide a means of communication  
 c. to provide a means of transport  
 d. to provide a means of storage  
 e. to provide a means of protection  
 f. to provide a means of identification  
 g. to provide a means of communication  
 h. to provide a means of transport  
 i. to provide a means of storage  
 j. to provide a means of protection  
 k. to provide a means of identification  
 l. to provide a means of communication  
 m. to provide a means of transport  
 n. to provide a means of storage  
 o. to provide a means of protection  
 p. to provide a means of identification  
 q. to provide a means of communication  
 r. to provide a means of transport  
 s. to provide a means of storage  
 t. to provide a means of protection  
 u. to provide a means of identification  
 v. to provide a means of communication  
 w. to provide a means of transport  
 x. to provide a means of storage  
 y. to provide a means of protection  
 z. to provide a means of identification

How is this imperfection to be compensated?

Of what does the Divine law consist?

What inference do you draw from its brevity?

What is the *golden rule*?

What are we to understand by this?

What is an obligation?

How are obligations classified by the ancient philosophers?

What is the nomenclature adopted by modern moralists?

What do you mean by an *imperfect* obligation?

Why must our fulfilment of them be purely voluntary?

Under what circumstances may obligations be suspended?

What is the extent of the relation between rights and obligations?

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

THE emphasis laid upon certain virtues, by the epithet *cardinal*, is deduced principally from the works of the ancient philosophers, whose views in this particular were adopted throughout the middle ages, but have not been perpetuated by the most recent modern moralists. The four virtues called by this name, have been brought forward into that prominent position in the science, apparently because they include all the others generally inculcated; and the principal reason for now reverting to the ancient practice is, that such a classification affords a facility for mental arrangement, and, consequently, a help to memory.

The cardinal virtues are, Moderation, Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence; and these we shall consider in their relation to the Divine law, and their adaptation to our intercourse with human society.

Moderation is that control which it is necessary to our personal happiness that we should exercise over our animal appetites, passions, emotions, affections, and even over some of our higher faculties. As it is necessary to prevent our

animal propensities from running into sensuality; so must our emotions and affections be kept on the practical side of morbid sentimentalism; and our intellect be guarded from insanity and other diseases, by duly measuring its natural capabilities; and even our devotional feelings be protected from the narrowness and cruelty of fanaticism, which is inconsistent with Christian charity. Moderation is a negative virtue; and the importance of such an influence in the eternal nature of things may be inferred from the facts, that the greater portion of the Decalogue consists of prohibitions; that the due restraint of our various impulses is that alone which prevents their degenerating into crime and misery; enhances by rarity of indulgence whatever pleasure we derive from them, and suggests that variety and alternation of enjoyment and exercise, which maintains the balance of our faculties. This part of the subject, however, we shall consider more fully in the chapter on the Passions.

Fortitude, in an ethical sense, is what we know more familiarly by the name of moral courage, as distinguished from that insensibility to external danger, which we possess in common with the fiercer of the inferior animals; that loftiness of sentiment, and sense of moral dignity, and power of endurance, which prompts us to defy perils and difficulties, when duty requires a sacri-

fice ; which urges us to tell the truth, when others would seek ease and safety in dissimulation ; to brave the frowns of power and the storms of unpopularity in the vindication of a principle ; and to resist the glittering temptations and soft seductions of gain and pleasure, when they can be purchased only by concessions and compromises, which would degrade us in our own estimation.

Justice may be defined to be the principle of awarding to all men, ourselves included, what we feel to be their several rights : and this obligation extends not merely to our actions, but to our words (which philosophy regards as acts), and to our opinions. We are as strongly bound by the Divine law to think and speak justly—so far as we think and speak at all—of our fellow men, as we are to give them their fair remuneration for services performed, and to refrain from exacting that to which we are not, ourselves, justly entitled : and this rule evidently includes and enjoins many subordinate virtues, such as truth, honesty, mercy, forgiveness, forbearance toward the imperfections of our common nature ; and, in one word, the charity of Christianity.

Prudence (literally signifying foresight) is that virtue, of which the highest function is the choice of such means toward the attainment of a given justifiable end, as shall combine the greatest

possible amount of safety and certainty, with as much of profit and as little of inconvenience to ourselves and to others, as it may be in the power of human sagacity to desire; to choose the shorter and less expensive of two given courses; and in many instances, to prefer the greater eventual good to the greater present advantage. It is prudence, in short, that in its higher and more comprehensive sense, weighs this world against eternity, virtue against vice, and chooses that course of secular usefulness, for which our natural capabilities and tendencies may be better adapted.

It will be perceived now, that these four virtues are intimately connected, each involving considerations which cannot be excluded from some or all the others; thus Fortitude includes many acts of moderation or self-denial: Prudence in many of its relations is associated with both these; as, when it exercises courage in looking beyond momentary dangers and discouragements, and self-control in resisting temptation for an ulterior recompense. Justice, in like manner, is made up of many positive and negative acts, which may be classified under the other three: we cannot be strictly just without restraining many of our own desires and impulses, and, on the other hand, without doing violence to many prejudices of others.



Of these cardinal virtues, Fortitude and Justice would appear to be those to which we are, instinctively, the most inclined. Our innate feeling, though operating with different degrees of intensity in different men, always awakens in us an involuntary admiration for acts of moral heroism, such as perseverance and success under great disadvantages; while our natural and irrepressible love of justice leads us, with an equal absence of design, to assist and sympathise with the feeble and oppressed, and by our own weight to restore the moral balance. And, although we may not consider such acts really more meritorious, we are more tempted to admire them, than the manifestations of the quiet and retiring virtues of Prudence and Moderation.

It is also easy to perceive, that these four virtues, while they conform to the precepts and limits dispersed every where through the pages of the sacred volumes, are not less indispensable—or rather, are accordingly necessary—to our internal happiness, and to our eventual security and success in dealing with the world. Moderation, in making us gentle, calm, and unobtrusive: Fortitude, in overcoming the many and inevitable vexations and crosses of life, the untowardness of accidents, and the machinations of enemies: Justice and Prudence, in securing that credit and reputation, which command the confidence and

cooperation of men. But there are certain sub-denominations of these, to which, as they are brought most actively and constantly into play in the ordinary affairs of civilized life, it is necessary to allude more at large in the following chapters.

#### QUESTIONS.

By whom were the Cardinal Virtues originally defined?

What are the advantages of this classification?

How do you name these Cardinal Virtues?

What is Moderation?

What are its most obvious uses?

How do you prove it to be consistent with the Divine Law  
and conducive to temporal happiness?

What is Fortitude?

How does this conduce to our happiness?

What is Justice?

In what part of our conduct is it most indispensable?

What subordinate virtues does it comprise?

What is Prudence?

How is it applicable to our religious and secular duties?

Can you shew how all these four virtues are connected?

Which of them do you consider most in accordance with our  
innate sentiments?

Can you illustrate this preference?

What are the advantages of the Cardinal Virtues, severally,  
in dealing with the world?

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PASSIONS.

THE emotions which relate to ourselves and other human beings are respectively called desires and affections; constituting the motives of all our actions, and variously controlling and counter-acting each other. Not being inculcated by precept or argument, they are instinctive impulses, and in ordinary language are known as the Passions. To look upon these as necessarily evil, and to suppress altogether, instead of regulating, their manifestations, is an excess of stoicism which receives its refutation from an enlarged view of the circumstances that surround us in the world. These circumstances, if we reflect upon them, we shall find to be such as to render existence a lifeless blank, if their influences be not recognised or modified, as the case may be, by those various emotions which result from the union of spirit and matter, and prove that our constitution includes some more impulsive element than the clay of which we are visibly formed. Our joys and sorrows, with their various and sometimes undistinguishable manifestations of smiles and tears; our fears and hopes, with all their

tremulous excitements; our anger, love, hatred, admiration, jealousy, envy, contempt, and indignation; all those various, minute, and blended shades of feeling, that testify to our approbation of the beautiful and the good, and to our aversion from deformity and *wrong*—all the emotions that chequer the aspect of our inner life, constitute, like those delicate fibres on which they thrill, our enjoyment and our defence; and are at the same time, if unchecked by moderation, capable of becoming the instruments of our misery and destruction.

The chariot of the soul, as Plato fancifully expresses it, is drawn by two coursers, one of celestial and one of earthly origin. The latter will, if he can, at any time take the bit between his teeth, and bring down the car and the rider to his native element; the other pulls upward to his congenial æther. These two steeds are the Passions and the Conscience. Previously to illustrating this position by a few instances, it is necessary to observe, that, although philosophy distinguishes the uses from the abuses of our faculties, we want a more precise nomenclature to mark the difference, than that of common conversation, which sometimes confounds the highest virtues with the vices by which they are travestied.

There are few characteristics more generally reprobated by common opinion than Pride; more

frequently condemned in Scripture, (which mostly alludes to obstinacy and cruelty under this name,) or, of which in some shape all human beings are more conscious. And yet by this name we speak of two very different qualities. Pride is of two kinds, defensive and offensive, which are distinguished in the French language by the respective terms, *la fierté* and *l'orgueil*; a distinction to which we might approximate by a proper use of the names, *pride* and *vanity*. The former is that sense of moral dignity, that abhorrence of all meanness and falsehood and degradation, which makes a man careful in his conduct, circumspect in his intimacies and associations, reluctant to incur and anxious to repay obligations, gentle in authority and impatient of control, honourable in pecuniary transactions, desirous of the respect and approbation of men, and, in a word, nobly ambitious. Pride of this sort is the amulet by which we preserve ourselves from the machinations of the evil, the perfume with which we walk in safety from contamination amid the haunts of vice. Never obtrusive, it receives distinctions dispassionately, and enjoys the consciousness of merit more than its recognition by popular applause. Vanity, on the other hand, relying, not upon intrinsic qualities, but upon the effect of imposing appearances, living only on what meets the public eye and what others say

of it, is ready to gratify itself at the expense of pain, anxiety, and degradation ; to weave a tissue, which the breaking of one thread will unravel—to construct a house, which the disturbance of a single stone will overthrow. As a general rule it may be said, that the reason why we sneer so bitterly at the vanity of others is, that its pretensions offend our own.

We may take, as another instance, ambition or emulation, that longing for pre-eminence which incites men to intense and long-sustained exertions, such as no physical compulsion has ever been known to enforce. It is this anxiety to excel that has supplied history with its most glorious and instructive examples, that has borne up genius on its loftiest flights, opened a wider horizon to the intellect in exploring unknown paths of science, and created the uses and ornaments of civilization, by counteracting that natural propensity to imitate which would otherwise have kept the human mind stationary at any given stage of its progress. But, however beneficial to the human race the success of those achievements may be, it is rarely productive of the happiness which men anticipate ; for, in the antithetic language of Lord Bacon, “ it is a strange desire to seek power and to love liberty ; or, to seek power over others, and to love power over a man’s self.” Indeed, it would seem that the chief enjoyment

is in the excitement of the pursuit; or, as it is forcibly expressed by Dr. Guy, "possession is *nine* tenths of the law, but it is not *one* tenth of the pleasure of the pursuit." It may also be said, that the benefit and pleasure together, no matter how great, can never equal the injury and misery of this feeling, when it seduces from the courses of truth and honour, and urges us to trample on the rights and feelings of others, or, when disappointment sours it into envy and malevolence<sup>a</sup>. "Ambitious men," says Lord Bacon, "if they find the way open for their rising, and still get forward, are rather busy than dangerous; but, if they be checked in their desires, they become secretly discontented, and look upon men and matters with an evil eye, and are best pleased when things go backward, which is the worst property in a servant of a Prince or State."

Anger in excess is insanity, and hurries men into crimes that entail long years of unavailing remorse, and of which the perpetrators would not perhaps, in their normal condition of mind, believe themselves capable; but, when the impulse does not lead to retaliation; when measures of self-defence, or a strong expression of dis-

<sup>a</sup> Here we have the confusion which invariably results from a disregard of the fundamental faculties. Envy arises from the selfish sentiments unrestrained by benevolence and conscientiousness. Malice *adds* destructiveness.

approbation, or remonstrance against injustice, are the only results; it may be fairly regarded as a natural and excusable emotion. Though revenge be not only an unchristian, but an undignified feeling; because, in the words of Lord Bacon, "in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy, but in passing it over, he is superior;" still, the man whom no provocation can exasperate, must be either a negative and useless character, a persevering and vigilant dissembler, or a being inconceivably elevated beyond all other existences; for anger is represented as actuating even the Saviour. (St. Mark iii. 5.) The due limit of the emotion is marked by St. Paul in the words, "Be angry, and sin not." It may be interesting, however, to state, that this text (Ephes. iv. 26.) has been sometimes considered susceptible of another interpretation: it has been proposed by some biblical scholars to read it interrogatively, and to translate, "are ye angry, and sin not?" (that is, can you give way to anger without falling into sin?) But there have been many expounders of Scripture, who seem to have forgotten that Christianity is the religion not of monachism, but of society and active life.

There is a class of tender emotions, known in ordinary language by the name of *sentiment*, powerfully influencing the thoughts, actions, and tempers of many refined, and generous, and ami-



able persons, constituting almost the whole essence of the mental being of persons of poetical temperament and genius, and mainly contributing to all that is graceful, ornamental, and high-toned in society. These, also, according as they are disciplined or unrestrained, are the source of much pure and unsensual enjoyment, or of much bitter suffering.

The dangers of excess in this case are, in the first place, that it renders men impractical, impatient of the stern and prosaic duties of active life, and likely to become disgusted with those harsh realities which fall short of their own ideal standard of moral fitness and harmony, like knives that may be made too sharp for use; and, secondly, that the contemplation of the imaginary sorrows and heroic sufferings which they love to dwell upon in works of artistic fiction, causes an expenditure of sympathy, which, as it is not followed by action, must tend more or less to harden the heart against real but less picturesque objects of compassion. Hence it may happen, that they who, like Heraclitus, weep over the follies and miseries of human life, are generally less useful and less beneficent members of society, than the Abderites, who, while they smile, impart more of hope, and remedy, and consolation.

Of our passions in general it may be said, that

they are to the constitution of society, what the agitation of the ocean and the atmosphere is to the physical world, imparting and sustaining life by their normal and moderate motion; but sometimes rising to the noise and fury of the tempest, and scattering around ruin and destruction. Without our passions we should live without all the excitements of poetry, which has been aptly defined to be "impassioned truth;" and it implies an ignorance of the first principles of human society to suppose, either that the business of life could be conducted without their influences, or that they are not in general the motives to those great and noble actions by which mankind are benefited.

It would be impossible to adduce a more apt illustration of the above assertion, than that supplied by the feeling of *curiosity*, from the satisfaction of which all our highest intellectual enjoyments flow; and which, at the same time, in its lower phases, becomes one of the meanest and most contemptible affections of our nature. Curiosity is, at the same time, but in widely different aspects, the feeling that excites the astronomer, the chymist, the geologist, the philologist, and the antiquarian, on one side; and on the other, the scandal-monger, and the gratuitous violator of privacy and reputation.

The fact, that every pleasure is the gratification of some desire or affection, associates with this subject a question which has been the theme of much earnest discussion; that is, what pleasures may be reasonably regarded as innocent. To this question, an impartial consideration of our constitution, and of the external circumstances to which it is so carefully and providentially adapted, will supply a concise and all-sufficient answer. In general, those pleasures are innocent, which are not followed by mental or physical pain; i. e. which do not involve cruelty to ourselves, or our fellow-creatures. The creation around us is rich in various sources of enjoyment, designed, if not for us, for nothing. For us the countless beauties of nature and art, with all their sights and sounds, exist; if we will only use them rationally, without asceticism and without sensuality. Of the inferior animals some have been given for our use; and the necessity for treating them kindly is beautifully illustrated by the fact, that cruelty renders them useless. Others have been given to us for food, which the anatomy of the human body would by itself sufficiently attest; and in sacrificing them to this object, every feeling of mercy, and of the dignity of our own superior nature, should prompt us to make their death as painless as we can. In this view of the question, then, it will appear, that to sacrifice the happiness, or welfare,

or innocence of any human being to our own gratification; to commit excess or cruelty (which are alike followed by pain) in satisfying our natural appetites of hunger and thirst; or even to hunt down wild animals, for the mere excitement of doing so; are sinful, and therefore irrational, pleasures.

## QUESTIONS.

What is the difference between desires and affections?

What is the origin of our passions?

What is their use?

How does Plato illustrate their relation to the other elements of our moral constitution?

What is the probable cause of the confusion in our minds of virtues with their kindred vices?

How many principal forms does pride assume?

How are these distinguished in French?

Have we any terms that may be considered analogous?

What account do you give of pride, properly so called?

How does vanity differ from this?

Why is vanity so generally disliked?

What are the uses of ambition to society?

What are the results of its abuse?

When does it afford most enjoyment to the ambitious man himself?

What is the difference between envy and malevolence?

What are the legitimate purposes of anger?

What does St. Paul say about it?

What are the dangers of excessive sentiment?

What are the uses and abuses of curiosity?

**What general definition can you give of innocent pleasures?**

**From what do you deduce the answer?**

**How do you show that all pleasures cannot be intended to be forbidden?**

**How are we bound to exercise our power of enjoyment over the inferior animals?**

**What conclusion do you draw from all these illustrations?**

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BENEVOLENCE.

THE most important of those qualities suggested by the consideration of the cardinal virtues, as having its field of action in collision with the world, is Benevolence, which term we shall use instead of Charity.

It is evident from the example of the Messiah Himself, and from St. Paul's ample definition of Benevolence, (which he calls *ἀγάπη*, 1 Cor. xiii.) as the spirit of patience, charity, fortitude, forgiveness, and, consequently, of self-denial, that it is only in society, and amid the active discharge of social and domestic duties, that its sphere of operation can be found; that such is the course of action most calculated to exercise beneficial influences on a world composed of beings instinctively social, and mutually dependent; and that the life of the monk or eremite can afford no field for its exercise. To withdraw one's self from human society and fellowship, must necessarily be an act either of selfishness or cowardice; a selfishness that casts off every sympathy and every moral obligation; or a cowardice that

shrinks from those perils and trials, from which alone our virtues can derive strength and development. It may be called, in short, a state of moral suicide, in which the affections exist but do not live, and become like the limbs of the Indian fakeer, held by him in the same position until they lose for ever the power of motion. "Solitude," says the great physiognomist Lavater, "is only for a dæmon or a wild beast:" only for a being raised above or sunk below the wants and sympathies of humanity: a state of collision is the natural element of the intellect and of the heart; and when other objects are removed, both will prey upon themselves; or, as Lord Bacon emphatically expresses it, "those that want friends to open themselves to, are cannibals of their own hearts."

If we had no evidence beyond the single precept, to love our neighbours as ourselves, it would suggest the inference, that active life is the proper sphere of Christianity: its duties can have no exercise in a seclusion where there are none to be loved, to be comforted, or to be resisted; and it is therefore impossible that on the stock of Christianity there could be engrafted any more uncongenial plant, than that monastic system, which, with many other superstitions, it has been made to borrow from Paganism.

This," says Lord Bacon, "of all virtues and

dignities of the mind is the greatest, being the characteristic of the Deity. Without it man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin. Goodness answers to the theological virtue Charity, and admits no excess but error. The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall; but in Charity is no excess, neither can man nor angel come in danger by it."

Of the evil propensities of our unreclaimed nature, which Christianity is designed by its Founder to counteract, the most universal are selfishness and cruelty. These are really the same principle, but bearing different names, according as it is quiescent or active; that is, while cruelty is aggressive, selfishness is merely defensive; and the original principle of both is a disregard of the happiness of others, when it interferes with the convenience or advantage of self. "Selfishness," to quote Lord Bacon again, "is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it fall; the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger who digged and made room for him; the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour:" and this feeling must appear to be peculiarly inconsistent with the benevolence of Christianity, because it is inconsistent with the normal relations of



society, which could not exist at all, if every man were merely and exclusively selfish.

Of cruelty, it is a mistake to suppose that it is mitigated by the progress of civilization in the ordinary sense of that term, or by any other influence than that of the only religion which produces gentleness and mutual forbearance. Refinement merely supplies cruelty with more highly polished weapons, and disguises "the iron hand in the silken glove." Although barbarism has in general ceased to torture men's bodies, it has given place to an artificial condition of society that tortures their minds; and the man who employs against the property or reputation of another the many legalized engines of persecution which a greater command of wealth furnishes to his hand, may be as fiercely and heartlessly cruel as the Red Indian, who uses the simple devices of the stake and the scalping-knife\*. There are many institutions in our social system which would appear barbarous to men whom we call barbarians because they eat with their fingers and shave their heads.

All this mutual inhumanity we must, with grief

\* The change which the possession of power induces upon the heart, was well understood by the ancient philosopher, who was asked, what he would do if he were suddenly made rich; and replied, "You may as well ask me what I would do if I were suddenly transformed into a wild beast."

and humiliation, attribute to the fact, that we are, in general, Christians but in name; that our hearts are not yet renewed by that Grace which can alone falsify the taunt of Macchiavelli, 'that the conditions of artificial society are such as to render it unsafe to be altogether Christian.' This view is unfortunately borne out by the history of the past and the present time.

"I came," said the Messiah, "not to bring peace on the earth, but rather a sword," prophesying the opposition which His doctrines were to encounter, and the strange phenomenon, that since His appearance in the world, more cruelties have been perpetrated by fanaticism in the name of religion, than ever political ambition, or any other passion, or, perhaps, all other passions together, inflicted upon the human race; cruelties upon which, in many instances, human ingenuity seems to have exhausted itself.

In order fully to appreciate the moral anomaly of such a state of things, it is necessary to consider these three facts. In the first place, that it is directly opposed to the ostensible spirit of all religions, and to the real and practical spirit of Christianity, no matter what may be the motive of persecution, whether it be to drive men against their will into what the persecutors may believe to be their only hope of salvation; or, which is more probable, though manifestly in-

consistent with the precept of obedience to constituted secular authorities, to maintain, by terror, the ascendancy of some sacerdotal caste over the minds of nations. Secondly, that it is the infliction of a physical punishment for what is, at the worst, but an error of judgment; because no man can be supposed to destroy deliberately his hope for eternity. This system of punishment, though a very general practice in all ages, is unnatural; because, as we possess a power of concealing our opinions, which does not extend to our actions, it is obviously the intention of Providence, that opinions should be the less controlled of the two; and because errors of judgment can be effectually assailed only by the moral weapons of patient argument. Thirdly, that religious belief, with most men, is rather a matter of sentiment than of reason. Men are in the habit of conceiving the same affection for the religion in which they happen to be born, that they entertain for the land of their birth; and, no matter how highly cultivated, of overlooking the possible absurdities of the one, as they excuse, or perhaps even love, the physical disadvantages of the other. Then, on the principle that one sentiment can be superseded only by another, the practical evidence of the better influences of another faith on society, must be the only effectual means by which men's original belief can be dis-

placed. A man will readily resign what he loves, if he can be made to love something else more; but, if he be made to suffer for loving it, and be persecuted for its sake, he will only cling to it more fondly. If then these views be correct, it must appear, that if we would bring over to pure Christianity the affections of that portion of the human race who are still without its pale, the most convincing argument must be, the contrast between the moral states of those who do and those who do not practise the virtues included in the Scriptural definition of its peculiar and characteristic benevolence. And this inference is also deducible both from the personal example of its Divine Founder, and from the recognised fact, that kindness is not only the most powerful, but eventually the only, agency by which the minds and the actions of men can be safely and permanently influenced.

## QUESTIONS.

- Where and how does St. Paul define Benevolence, or Charity?
- What is the Greek term employed by him?
- What do you infer from that definition as to the sphere intended for the exercise of Charity?
- Why cannot a monastic life be one of Benevolence?
- How does it appear that such a life is unnatural?
- What is the origin of the monastic institution?
- What does Lord Bacon say of Charity?
- What vices especially is it intended to counteract?

What is the distinction between these?

How does Lord Bacon speak of selfishness?

Why is selfishness unnatural?

What effect has the artificial refinement of manners upon cruelty?

Why do you suppose that cruelty still exists in society?

What does Macchiavelli say of the adaptation of artificial society to Christianity?

How does Christianity *appear* to be chargeable with cruelty?

Where is that prophesied?

What are the motives of religious persecution?

How are these motives inconsistent with religious professions?

Why would it appear that opinions should not be persecuted?

What is the philosophy of religious belief: that is, how do men become attached originally to their several creeds?

How, then, should erroneous forms of belief be assailed?

## CHAPTER IX.

### TRUTH.

IF there be any Christian virtue for which, more than any other, we may confidently expect a temporal reward, it is Truth. We shall, therefore, first consider what its observance implies, and then review some of the many phases exhibited by its counterfeit.

Truth may be defined to be, the correct representation of what we believe to be facts, so far as we represent them at all. When it relates to deeds, as distinguished from words, it is called sincerity; and when to mercantile transactions, honesty.

Of all the moral virtues, it was the most highly esteemed by the ancients, probably because of the secular advantages attending it; and because, being one of the strongest proofs of moral courage, it was a principal element in their idea of heroism.

Truth is one of those virtues indispensable to the economy of society; because, if men in general were to lose their feeling of obligation to speak truthfully, no man could rely upon any information beyond the limited results of his own ex-

perience. A community of liars could not exist as a society; the very success of falsehood is a consequence of that reliance which society places upon all probable statements: and from these facts we infer the intention of Providence respecting it, as well as the existence of that instinctive tendency towards it, which is felt more or less by all men, no matter how depraved by habit. Indeed, one can scarcely imagine any precept, for worldly use, which it is more necessary to impress upon the young, than that they shall, under all circumstances, strictly adhere to truth; and suffer neither vanity, nor enmity, nor fear, nor *mauvaise honte*, to turn them aside from that straight path, which is the shortest and safest course to every end. It will smooth away many difficulties, dispel many dangers, disarm enmity and vindictiveness, and prove the most effectual atonement for many errors. With respect to these, no generous mind can hesitate to confess them; it is merely an acknowledgment that one is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.

It is of course necessary to a reputation for truth, that if one make a promise or a contract, nothing short of a physical impossibility should prevent the fulfilment of the undertaking. To these obligations, however, there are apparent exceptions, founded upon other similar obligations, which, in virtue of their priority, are more bind-

ing; because it is an axiom in Ethics, that of two contradictory obligations, the first in point of time is alone binding.

It is not, then, a necessary inference from the moral necessity of truth, that we are upon all occasions required to communicate *all* that we may know upon a given subject: we are in many instances bound by a previous obligation, either expressed or implied, (that is, as we say, *in honour*,) to be silent. For example, the disclosure of what are called professional secrets, circumstances confided to physicians, clergymen, lawyers, editors, and other such persons, would be a treacherous and dishonourable violation of a confidence constituting a prior obligation; and, in any case, if the knowledge of a certain revelation, which one may have it in his power to make, would injure any, and produce no greatly counter-vailing benefit to the community, silence is charity. (Proverbs xvii. 9. and xxi. 23.)

There are certain conventional phrases, to which common usage has attached a meaning different from the literal acceptation, and which may appear to convey falsehoods not really implied. When a servant, for instance, informs us that his master is *not at home*, (instead of saying, as might well be said, that he is *engaged*;) or, when a prisoner at the bar declares himself *not guilty*; we never actually believe that the person so denied may not be in the



house, or that the accused is innocent, or even that the advocate who defends him believes him to be so. Again, when a correspondent assures us that he is "our obedient and humble servant," or begs us to "accept the assurances of his highest consideration," we may nevertheless suspect in the former case, that he intends to be very disobliging, and in the latter, that it would cost him very little pain to sacrifice our dearest interests to his own views. In all these and many other instances, such as the publication of works of fiction, no confidence is violated, because none is ever reposed.

There are instances, also, in which promises are not necessarily binding; and these exceptions are the more numerous, because promises, being always prospective, and of a totally different nature from assertions relating to past events, are liable to be affected by all the unforeseen contingencies of the future. A promise, in short, should be always conditional, at least with reference to the permission of Divine Providence; and, whether made in definite terms, or implied by actions tending naturally to raise certain expectations, or even deducible from silence, should be always performed in the sense in which it may be reasonably supposed to be understood. Promises, then, do not involve a moral obligation, when any event occurs in the mean time to render

the performance impossible; or, when they are given in ignorance of circumstances that, if known, would have caused the promiser to withhold them; or, when the performance would be unlawful, and would therefore violate a previously existing obligation; or, when they are extorted by force or intimidation. In all such cases, however, as minor details vary so considerably as to diversify the aspects of the obligations, we must be guided by our consciences, and by a consideration of the general rather than of the particular consequences. Much of the intercourse of society depends on the implied sincerity of various sorts of engagements; and, if we were to consider ourselves absolved from our promises in all cases where they are forced upon us, the violation of such confidence would naturally exclude others—and certainly ourselves on all subsequent occasions—from the temporary consequences secured by the engagement.

Dr. Paley supposes the case of one who rescues himself from a highwayman by the promise of a certain ransom, and speculates whether he be morally bound to pay it. It would appear that he is, for these reasons; because, if he had the money with him at the moment of danger, he would have given it as the price of his life, and the penalty on his incapability of self-defence;

because, if he fail to keep his word, the next victim of the robber will not be suffered to escape on the same terms ; and because he exposes himself to the imputation of having broken his promise. A parallel case would be that of a debtor, who suffers a heavy per-centage to be added to his liability, rather than undergo the degradation of imprisonment. He is certainly bound, morally as well as legally, to pay it ; because although the exaction is mean and cruel, it is the value which he allows to be assigned to his reputation.

A certain philosopher in Athens assisted a young citizen in his studies, on the understanding that he should receive payment as soon as his pupil should succeed in gaining a cause as an advocate. After some time the philosopher became impatient, and summoned his pupil to court in order to enforce payment ; because, said he, if the judges decide in my favour, you will be bound to pay by the judgment of the court ; if they decide for *you*, you are bound by our agreement ; in either event, you must pay. The case is precisely the reverse, retorted the defendant ; for, if they decide for you, I shall have lost my cause, and therefore my promise is not due ; and, if they decide for me, I shall be released by the court : in either case, I shall not pay. Here, it must appear that the philosopher was wrong,

because he did not wait for the maturity of the promise, in the sense in which it was originally understood.

The habit of falsehood originates generally in a comparatively innocent but very erroneous intention: erroneous, because the object of creating amusement or exciting wonder can be more effectually attained by a different exercise of the imagination; and because the design frustrates itself, for the exaggeration is detected and despised. By repeated acts of indulgence, however, the propensity grows into a habit, until harmless falsehoods pall on the appetite, the excitement of mischief becomes necessary, the reputations of others supply piquant food, and the malicious pleasures of scandal and slander present an irresistible temptation to moral principles long accustomed to sacrifice themselves to effect. Then, as the fine sentiment of sincerity and candour is worn away, it becomes only too easy and obvious an expedient, to evade all dangers and difficulties by any assertion suited to the occasion. Of almost any other crime it may be said, that, although exciting horror, or indignation, it is still but the overflowing of some uncontrolled passion, which, if moderated, might be harmless; but falsehood, prompted only by vanity, or malice, or fear, can awaken scarcely any other feeling than contempt.

The different forms which falsehood assumes

consent with the concept of absolute and eternal authorities, to make a statement of some sacredness and a value. Secondly, the idea of a universal punishment is not, as an error of judgment, but a support to the law of error. This is a very general principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Thirdly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Fourthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Fifthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Sixthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Seventhly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Eighthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Ninthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Tenthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Eleventhly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Twelfthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Thirteenthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Fourteenthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

Fifteenthly, it is a principle, because, as we have seen, it is a principle of error.

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to pure Chinese. I wonder can it be more effective of the human movement. A different cause of the the most common cause because the deep frustration: trust between human generation is small and they and time will be the acts of misgiving, however, ended in a human world into a half and humanism and character on the approach. A system of is also necessary. Sometimes necessary of its humanism. A poignant for the malice of fact, the scandal and only present and the but even a relation to a humanism and the and a sacrifice them. A humanism and the sentiment of humanism, it becomes

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when adopted as a system of conduct designed for worldly advancement, are the opposite disguises of dissimulation and hypocrisy. These—the suppression of one's real character, and the imitation of one which it may be inconvenient sincerely to assume—are distortions of the moral symmetry, that frequently attain an imposing degree of what is conventionally called success\*. In society, indeed, constituted as it has ever been in intervals of refinement, some leaven of both these ingredients appears to be indispensable, not to success merely, but even to toleration. A highly artificial state of society admits but little social freedom: what is commonly called “address,” presents to the philosopher's eye only a network of insincerity and selfishness: perfect candour and freedom from prejudices would be regarded in what is called society as eccentricities at the least; and these, however innocent, are generally punished with more severity than many crimes, provided only that the latter be fashion-

\* Lord Bacon says, “Fortune is like the milken way in the sky, which is a meeting or knot of a number of small stars, not seen asunder, but giving light together: so are there a number of little and scarce discerned virtues, or rather faculties and customs, that make men fortunate. And certainly, there be not two more fortunate properties, than to have a little of the fool, and not too much of the honest.” He is here speaking, however, not of what *ought to be*, but of what *is*.

able. There are some circles even, in which an inconvenient question, an awkward gesture, or a dissent from some popular superstition, would be considered a more unpardonable offence than the violation of the whole decalogue. Such facts as these, however, lead to the inference, that vices are generally cultivated every where, only for the profit or pleasure which they may supply at the moment, and not for their own sake, or through any innate preference: thus, falsehood in its various forms is essentially the vice of civilisation, as physical cruelty is that of barbarism; because the ends of personal ambition can be most easily attained in the one case by fraud, and in the other by force; and the prevalence of hypocrisy proves, of itself, that they who find most pleasure or profit in vice, recognise the instinctive tendency to virtue, which acts more or less powerfully in every human being; for, otherwise, they would never profess to be what they are not.

The dissimulation and hypocrisy, properly coming under consideration here, are not the conventional formalities of society, the hollowness of which is so generally understood that no serious confidence is ever violated; but the systematic deceptions of those who trade with the credulity of the public, by concealing vices which they cherish, and by affecting virtues or acquirements which they do not possess. Falsehoods of this



description are more generally acted than spoken ; for falsehood is not by any means confined to words ; and the glance of an eye or the motion of a finger may be fully as mendacious as the tongue, and are always found in combination : neither can exist without the other ; for it is impossible to suppress one's real feelings or motives, without substituting others ; and the man who disguises enmity under flattery for the purpose of disarming suspicion, who veils ignorance behind an affectation of learning, who assumes a solicitude for the public welfare which he is ready at any moment to sell, and who covers pride, cruelty, and tyranny, under a mask of sanctity, is guilty of the same species of fraud, as the manufacturer of base coin, and the forger of other men's names, with the mere difference of his being less daring. Indeed, there is ever an essential meanness in the wish to secure an advantage over any other man, except by the fair recognition of real merit : the only competition worthy of a wise man is with his own imperfections ; and, if he can conquer these, he may be certain of surpassing in the end all other antagonists.

It may probably be supposed, that such pretences cannot altogether, or for a considerable time, escape detection. The fact is, that they do not eventually escape it ; but,—as the few who

can penetrate their disguises are unheeded by the great majority who are too blind or too indifferent to feel resentment; and as falsehood, from its conscious insecurity, is more obtrusive than truth,—it happens in many cases, that before the delusion is dissipated, the deception has effected its object; and that some deceptions have been known to hold their ground for centuries, and, to all appearance, to strike their roots more deeply as they grow older. On this subject, see Job xxvii. 8, 9; St. Matthew xxiii; St. Luke xvi; Ep. to Titus i. 16; 2 Timothy iii. 5; 1 Corinthians iv. 20.

After all, falsehood is never secure; there is ever some weak point in the structure, ready at any moment to overturn the most ingeniously constructed edifice<sup>b</sup>.

If it can be said that any forms of falsehood are more mischievous and contemptible than

<sup>b</sup> It is remarked by many moralists, that no human being can be altogether and “all over” mendacious; for, as Lord Bacon says, “the discovery of a man’s self by the traits of his countenance, is a great weakness and betraying, by how much it is many times more marked and believed than a man’s words;” and experienced advocates have been often heard to say, that in the examination of witnesses, though the tongue may not falter, nor the countenance change, the tremor of a hand or foot has awakened the suspicions of perjury.

others, these are unquestionably the opposite vices of flattery and slander.

Flattery, being a complimentary falsehood dictated by self-interest, is especially demoralizing; because it is at once insulting to the intelligence of its victim, and calculated to impress upon him an undue estimate of the servility of his fellow-creatures. The victim of adulation, if he be weak-minded, conceives an erroneous idea of himself and others; and if he be proof against the intoxication, must perceive that his flatterers are describing not himself, but some imaginary character. (See Proverbs xxvi. 28; xxix. 5; Psalms xxi. 3, 5.)

Slander, which is the circulation of falsehood, or even of truth itself, with the deliberate intention of inflicting injury, is more gratuitously mischievous than flattery, because mere cruelty is less defensible than even vanity or selfishness. "To infuse suspicions," observes Dr. Paley, "to kindle or continue disputes, to avert the favour and esteem of benefactors from their dependents, to render some one we dislike contemptible or obnoxious in public opinion, are all offices of slander, of which the guilt must be measured by the intensity and extent of the misery produced." It is difficult to imagine any thing more inconsistent with the charity that "covereth (that is, casts a veil over, or ignores) the multitude of

sins," or even with our innate sentiment of honour, than a state of mind so distorted as to derive pleasure from such acts as these; nor should we be surprised to find, that the slanderer is eventually poisoned by the venom of his own bite. "To prevent anger," says an old sententious preacher of the last century, "be not too inquisitive into the affairs of others, or what people say of yourself, or the mistakes of friends; for this is going out to gather sticks to kindle a fire to burn your own house<sup>c</sup>."

<sup>c</sup> This precept, which it is the Christian's duty to observe toward both the living and the dead, has been beautifully set in poetry by the late Thomas Moore, in these lines:

"When cold in the grave lies the friend thou hast loved,  
Be his faults and his follies forgot by thee then;  
Or, if from their slumber the veil be removed,  
Weep o'er them *in silence*, and close it again!"

#### QUESTIONS.

How do you define *truth*?

When does it take the names of *sincerity* and *honesty*?

Why does it appear to have been highly esteemed by the ancients?

Why is it necessary to the intercourse of society?

What inference is deducible from this fact?

Why should we not hesitate to confess our errors?

On what occasions may we be excused from telling the *whole* truth?

On what principle are conventional falsehoods sometimes admitted?

On what general principle does the obligation of a promise depend?

In what circumstances may we consider promises not binding?

How should compulsory promises be regarded, and on what principle?

Why should all promises be conditional?

How does the habit of falsehood generally originate?

Why is it more contemptible than other vices?

What are *dissimulation* and *hypocrisy*?

What are the causes of their prevalence?

Why is falsehood essentially a vice of civilization?

What is proved by the existence of hypocrisy?

Are the delusions of falsehood necessarily of very short duration?

What do the inspired writers say of hypocrisy?

What is *flattery*, and what are its consequences?

How is it spoken of in Scripture?

What is slander?

How does Dr. Paley speak of it?

What is meant by the text, that "charity covereth the multitude of sins?"

## CHAPTER X.

### HONESTY.

CHRISTIANITY is so far from interdicting the pursuit of secular advantages, that it recognises their uses in its own service, and even expressly enjoins, in many places, the practice of those virtues, by which alone they can be effectually, securely, and permanently acquired; (e. g. the eighth and tenth Commandments; Proverbs xi. 25; xxii. 16, 28; xviii. 8; Micah ii. 1, 2; Isaiah xxxiii. 1; St. Luke iii. 13; Romans xiii. 7; 1 Corinthians vi. 7, 8, 10; 2 Corinthians iv. 2; Ephesians iv. 28; 1 Thess. iv. 6.) Honesty, industry, and prudence, in worldly pursuits, being thus recommended as duties in connexion with munificence and liberality, (St. Matthew v. 42; Hebrews xiii. 2; 1 Peter iv. 9. &c.) are therefore not included in the condemnation declared against a selfish and exacting idolatry of wealth, but are encouraged by express promises of temporal reward. (St. Luke vi. 38.)

Honesty is truth practically applied to commercial transactions; or, more explicitly, the principle of dealing with others, as we would desire, or can reasonably expect, others to deal

with us. To fulfil this obligation, we must be guided rather by our consciences than by human laws, which, from their abstract nature, inevitably afford many opportunities of oppression and extortion, which honourable and Christian men must scorn to use; and as there are no individuals, of whatever rank in society, who do not, in some form, buy and sell; the obligation of fidelity and sincerity in such contracts, is one of universal necessity and use.

Contracts are mutual and formal promises; and, as a liberal reliance upon them is indispensable to the prosecution of all mercantile speculations, public and private, the facilities for dishonesty between professional tradesmen are considerably restricted, as well by the municipal laws, as by their own technical usages. It is therefore only, or at least principally, between them and their unprofessional customers that fraudulent transactions are found to occur; because, in this case, detection is more difficult, as requiring some technical skill, and because the penalties are less formidable; thus rendering the obligation comparatively imperfect, and, so far, more essentially moral.

A tradesman, or any other individual offering any commodity for sale, who exaggerates its value, or conceals its imperfections, or represents it, in any way or degree, as different from what

it really is, acts as fraudently, as the purchaser who holds back the whole or a portion of the price, and aggravates the fraud by the characteristic cowardice of falsehood; because it is more easy for the seller to enforce his payment, than for the purchaser to prove a deficiency in the quantity or quality of the article sold.

Though the obligation to give in all cases a reasonable value for money received, and a fair remuneration for value of any sort, is of itself sufficiently clear and intelligible; still, so endless is the diversity of circumstances in which honour and expediency seem to clash, and so numerous the cases to which no written (human) law can apply, that it is frequently very difficult to determine how far one is at liberty to consult his own interest at the risk of others. A merchant may, for instance, have received private intelligence of events calculated to raise or lower prices, which he can use for his own advantage, and may be uncertain whether he be bound in honour to make it public. He may be aware of his having sustained an accidental loss, which secrecy would enable him to retrieve. He may have reason to believe, that, if he undertake a certain speculation, exceeding the actual scope of his present means, the result will be an improvement in his position. Such cases may be suggested without number; and to all such there



seems to be but one comprehensive reply, that regard must be had to the general, rather than to the particular, consequences of the choice of an alternative; that is, to the consequences likely to result to the community if all acted, as we may be ourselves tempted to act, in given circumstances.

In general it may be said, that the really disinterested course is eventually, even in its temporal consequences, the more profitable; for it is an error to suppose, that human life is merely a scramble and competition of isolated interests; and if mankind were but practically convinced, that the true interest of each is identical with that of the whole community, much selfishness and crime, and consequent misery, would disappear from society, and be remembered with the same feelings with which we now look back upon the human sacrifices of our barbarian ancestors.

On the identity of expediency and honour, (which, in Latin, is synonymous with honesty,) Cicero argues with his usual elevation of sentiment. "No true expediency," he writes, "can co-exist with dishonour; because, as nothing can be so repugnant to nature (i. e. to the moral sentiment) as dishonour, and nothing so conformable to nature as expediency; expediency and dishonour cannot exist together in the same action. Depraved men are, therefore, under a misconception, whenever something

apparently expedient attracts them, suggesting a distinction between itself and honour; and hence come the dagger, the poison-cup, forgeries of wills, theft, embezzlement, robbery, and extortion<sup>a</sup>." (*De Off.* iii. 9.)

Passing on, however, from all intricate and debateable questions, to that of the great epidemic of dishonesty that appears to infect the social atmosphere, and is the chief subject of complaint with all foreign visitors and travellers in all civilized nations, we shall select a few of its most constantly recurring phases. Clearly, then, professional traders are acting dishonestly, and sacrificing their eventual stability to the chances of present gain; when they take advantage of the ignorance or necessities of strangers; when they raise prices to inconvenience competitors; when they sell at a loss in order to compel others to do the same; when they send "accommodation bills" to their bankers, under pretence of their representing *bond fide* exchanges; when they sell

<sup>a</sup> Of noble disinterestedness in fulfilling pecuniary obligations, there has seldom, if ever, occurred a more remarkable instance than the moral heroism of the late Sir Walter Scott, who applied himself, at the age of fifty-five, to pay off, by his literary labours alone, a debt of £120,000, never actually incurred by himself, and from which he could have legally freed himself, without any sacrifice beyond that of his inflexible honesty.

off inferior goods by means of "tremendous sacrifices;" and when they ruin smaller tradesmen, according to legal forms, in order to save themselves from important losses. When we observe the systematic recurrence of all these phenomena in the mercantile world, we can with difficulty divest ourselves of the apprehension, that a considerable portion of the operations of commerce every where is little better than a game of chance, in which some party or the other must necessarily be defrauded.

But there are still more unprincipled and gratuitous acts of dishonesty committed every day, and with the most perfect (present) impunity, by persons who would indignantly disclaim any association with trade. Among the higher, or at least the more idle, classes of society, it is considered a perfectly legitimate exercise of superior sagacity, to practise ingenious frauds in the buying and selling of horses and dogs; and a perfectly lawful pastime to risk large sums of money upon the accidental colour of a card, the fall of a die, or the turn of a coin; and to commit other crimes still more destructive of human happiness, which in most cases would be impossible, without the violation of solemn promises. And here it may be satisfactory to draw a wide distinction between games of *chance*, which at best can only supply a morbid excitement, and those

several games of *skill*, which tend to exercise and develop some useful faculty of mind or body.

If we inquire into the causes or motives of dishonesty, we shall find them to be, like those of falsehood, so many modifications of selfishness. A tradesman, for instance, in order to accommodate himself to an instinctive and prevalent desire for cheapness, with the least possible loss to himself, adulterates his goods, and curtails his weights and measures. A second trader, in order to maintain a competition, improves upon the example; and so the practice becomes general; the rights of labour are disregarded; the mercantile community becomes demoralized, and suffers in the end the inevitable penalties of selfishness.

Again, in order to secure a monopoly, one trader pits his capital and credit against those of another; and, if he succeed in ruining him, indemnifies himself by raising his prices to the prejudice of the public. In private life also, it happens too frequently, that, for the purpose of "keeping up appearances," and holding their position in a rank with which they had been perhaps, under better circumstances, identified, many persons incur debts, which they must be morally certain that nothing short of a miracle can ever enable them to pay. Of such a system, the general consequences are, that unnecessary inconvenience is caused by the destruction of con-

fidence, and the refusal of pecuniary accommodation in cases where it may be safely and beneficially afforded. Extravagance and avarice, therefore, are in reality but different phases of the same insanity of selfishness, that disregards all moral and social obligations for its own gratification; the difference being merely, that the latter manifestation of the passion, in its anxious pursuit of the means, loses sight of the end; while the former, impatiently neglecting the means, grasps prematurely at the end.

#### QUESTIONS.

How far does Christianity sanction or forbid the pursuit of worldly advantages?

How do you define honesty?

Why are human laws not a sufficient guide?

Why is the obligation of honesty universal?

What transactions afford most facilities for dishonesty?

Why is the dishonest seller more (morally) guilty than the dishonest purchaser?

How are questions to be decided between honesty and expediency?

What does Cicero say on this subject?

Can you name some of the most ordinary instances of dishonesty in mercantile transactions?

What are those most usually committed in the higher grades of society?

Are all games dishonest? How do you distinguish?

What appears to be the original motive to dishonesty?

What are the most obvious general consequences of dishonesty?

What is the difference between avarice and extravagance?

How far are they identical?

## CHAPTER XI.

### INDUSTRY.

THE subject of the preceding chapter leads us, by a natural transition, to the consideration of the necessity and the merits of industry; which may be defined to be the legitimate exercise of our mental and bodily faculties, as tending to our temporal and eternal happiness. "There are men," says Seneca, "who live without an object; like straws upon a river, they do not move, but are carried." How inconsistent such a mode of existence is with the intention of Providence, we can readily satisfy ourselves, not only by a reference to the revealed will of God, but even by contemplating and arguing from our own mental and physical organization, and the external phenomena of nature.

Among the scriptural precepts may be specified those communicated to us in the allegory of "the talents;" in the curse pronounced upon the barren fig-tree; in the Proverbs of Solomon, where passages, numerous beyond selection, inculcate the certainty of the miseries and punishments of idleness; and in the following texts, Ephesians iv. 28. Romans xii. 10. and 2 Thessalonians iii. 10—12.

Of the inferences from natural theology, the most direct and obvious are the following.

1. We are endowed with mental and bodily faculties more or less powerful, entrusted with a greater or less number of talents; and we find that these are improvable by exercise, and destructible by inaction, to a greater extent than we may probably, at first view, think possible. "What stubbing, ploughing, and harrowing is to land," says Bishop Berkeley, "thinking, reflecting, and examining is to the mind."

2. The cultivation by exercise of our intellectual and moral faculties, independently of the pleasure which it yields, is necessary as a preparation for a future state of existence. Of that future life, it is not unreasonable to anticipate, that, if not purely spiritual, it will at least be embodied in a corporeal frame that shall require no renovation or repose; because, as the instrument of a more powerful mind, it is but natural to expect that the body will possess a greater mechanical power. We may reasonably infer, from a strictly logical analogy, that those mental powers which are now restricted by the necessary conditions of a finite state of being, will be hereafter enlarged for the free use and enjoyment of immortality. We may, for instance, look forward to the command of a power of memory capable of reviewing at a glance all our past knowledge,

with a vivid and sadly pleasing recollection of personal identity; to the possession of a more perfect control over the association of our ideas, a more intuitive and instantaneous perception of abstract truths, a more complete and accurate and immediate mode of communication between mind and mind than language; and, in short, a development, such as would be unsuited to our present position, of all those faculties, the contemplation of which, even as they are, lends so strong a charm to the study of Metaphysics. Such an improvement upon our present state would not involve a difference wider than that which we may observe any day between one living man and another; and if such expectations be not unreasonable, we may with equal confidence presume, that those enlarged and emancipated faculties cannot be destined for an eternity of idleness; but will carry us beyond those barriers of knowledge, which are now impassable.

3. A human being is physically the most helpless and defenceless of all the more highly organized animals, except so far as his bodily powers—the hand, for instance—are the mechanical servants of his intellect. He is deficient in all those lower instincts that protect and provide for the inferior animals. It is, therefore, only by his ingenuity and industry, that he can



assert and maintain his sovereignty over the creation originally designed for his inheritance.

4. The agencies of inanimate nature will not, without labour, accommodate themselves to our use. For instance, the condition of a garden which has been neglected for a season or two, is a fair specimen of the state of an island or continent when inhabited by savage tribes, who are incapable of educing its resources, and who, subsisting on the spoils of the chase, like beasts of prey, require for their support an extent of territory capable of maintaining, if cultivated, a population hundreds of times more numerous.

5. Idleness is misery. In the case of those persons, whom fortune contributes all that she can give to raise above the necessity of exertion, we may observe, that continued inactivity produces a degree of discontent little short of insanity; and, that individuals of that favoured class are compelled to escape from the monotony of inaction to laborious studies, to amusements more laborious than the occupations of those to whom labour is life; and that they are sometimes driven to seek relief even in the strong excitements of actual danger. "I see the goodness of God," says Dr. Channing, "in placing us in a world where labour alone can keep us live."

6. What is true of individuals, is also true respecting nations. Throughout all history we find, that the most industrious nations have been the most permanently powerful, and have left the fairest legacies of fame to their successors; because the individuals composing them have been the most energetic and persevering; and that from the time when any nation became indolent and enervated, it began to sink in the scale of political influence.

From all these considerations, it cannot be difficult to infer, that our wants, our instincts, and our relation to all external circumstances, combine in enjoining upon us a life of industry. But, in addition to the mere necessity and duty of industry, we must also consider its advantages; and in order to appreciate these, we have to include as well its highest and most speculative, as its merely practical departments. These powerfully react upon and facilitate each other; because a division of labour into mental and physical is necessary to progress in both.

By mental industry, we raise ourselves in the scale of being, and acquire a more intrinsic, and therefore a more enduring, elevation of rank, than any artificial distinctions can confer; and we, at the same time, qualify ourselves for enjoyments as far beyond the pleasures of sense, as spirit is superior in its essence to matter.

Industry, being the antidote to moral and physical poverty, meets its most formidable antagonist in that indolence and dread of exertion, by which our best and noblest resolutions are too often defeated, and which is only, or at least most effectually, to be overcome, by confronting it with some powerful motive to exertion. Such a motive is honourable ambition; the determination to achieve reputation and independence, and to rise, on the one hand, above the degradation of ignorance, which becomes only more shamefully conspicuous in those whom fortune has otherwise favoured; and, on the other, above the many heart-burnings, and contumelies, and disabilities, and the fierce and evil temptations, and all the many demoralizing influences of poverty. If then, for no higher motive than to gain a standing-place inaccessible to all these,—and they are fatal to all the ease, and peace, and harmony of life,—we should be industrious; “By the assistance of three teachers, aided by self-determination,” says Dr. Croly in one of his eloquent works, “every thing may be learned. They are, necessity, habit, and time. Necessity tells us, that to live, we must labour: habit turns the labour to an indulgence; and time gives man an hour for every thing, unless he chooses to yawn it away.”

We may observe around us in the world, that

the happiest individuals are those who are successfully engaged in some useful occupation; but, in order to be either happy or successful in one's labour, it is necessary that it be congenial. "In the great field of action," says the Roman historian, "his nature suggests a different course to each." It is a wise arrangement of Providence, that our adaptations and tastes shall be as different as our several statures or complexions: and the man who engages in any pursuit perceptibly above or below his natural powers,—above all, in any pursuit involving a constraint upon his tastes and tendencies,—is certain to assume with it a misery that poisons every hour, frustrates every effort, and paralyzes every energy of his life. "A cripple in the right way," says Lord Bacon, "may beat a racer in the wrong one; nay, the better and fleetier the racer is, who hath once missed his way, the farther he leaves it."

Mistakes in this particular entail a large amount of suffering upon society. It too frequently happens, that our professions—with the best and kindest motives perhaps—are chosen for us, before we can ourselves measure our capabilities or analyse our predilections; and hence it is that we see some men pining under the yoke of the chained eagle, and others suffering tortures of the affrighted quadruped that

QUESTIONS.

What is the object of the intellect?  
What is the object of the will?  
What is the object of the passions?  
What is the object of the senses?  
What is the object of the soul?  
What is the object of the body?

QUESTIONS.

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What is the object of the soul?  
What is the object of the body?  
What is the object of the intellect?  
What is the object of the will?  
What is the object of the passions?  
What is the object of the senses?  
What is the object of the soul?  
What is the object of the body?

what would you infer the necessity of choosing a con-  
nial occupation?

t does Lord Bacon say about it?

7 do we so frequently see men in uncongenial pro-  
ssions?

## CHAPTER XII.

### ETHICS AND NATURAL THEOLOGY.

IN addition to the testimony which the phenomena of the external world bear to the wisdom, power, and benevolence of the Creator, there is still another higher and more deeply interesting department of natural theology, in which we can trace the operation of these same attributes in the manifold adaptation of our moral faculties to the circumstances by which we are surrounded. It is to this latter branch of the subject that we are, in this chapter, exclusively to direct our attention; and this is the more necessary, because, in these particular relations, the connection of design and result may not be as self-evident to the generality of minds, as it is in the other class of inferences. The adaptations here are, at the first view, less obvious; and there are some *apparent* inconsistencies to be explained away. Of these, the most remarkable is that consideration to which we have alluded above, as presenting their great difficulty to the ancient philosophers, and respecting which some modern moralists are not yet fully satisfied. This is, the inadequacy of moral means and abilities to our aspirations after

and wishes for perfection ; or, as it is more popularly expressed, the existence of moral evil in a system where our instinctive tendencies are towards virtue and happiness\*.

It is naturally calculated to shock opinions, conceived previously to an actual experience and study of human life, that we should see—or fancy that we see—virtue suffering and vice triumphant: that we should see around us the cold, the cruel, the selfish, and the unrelenting—hearts that, to all appearance, never know an anxious thought or a bitter sorrow, and that seem so constituted that they could not feel them deeply even if they came—enjoying to their last hour all that this world can give of wealth and power and fame; and, on the other hand, the sensitive, the gentle, the generous, and the affectionate, wounded and torn by the merciless scourge of misfortune and disappointment; until we come at last to look upon the theory of poetical justice as nothing more real than a day-dream of romance,

\* These two principles of good and evil were treated by Manes (a Persian philosopher of the third century) as eternal and antagonistic. The poetical language of this allegory, understood in its literal sense, supplied the origin and tenets of the Manichæan sect in the early Christian Church. It was by this literal acceptance of the language of poetical personifications of abstract ideas, that many mythological fables of antiquity were formed.



and fancy ourselves contemplating a world, "where all save the spirit of man is divine." It is not easy, at first, to reconcile this impression with the results of our investigation of the other division of the science, which shews us that the wants, and even the enjoyments of all inferior creatures, are amply and appropriately provided. Indeed, the mere light of nature is unable to meet this difficulty with a complete solution. Reason, however, makes the following suggestions.

1. As our existence in this world is finite, it is but reasonable to suppose that our happiness, in conformity with the other conditions of our being, shall also be finite; and that we should, in our present state, enjoy proportionately less of that species of happiness, which seems congenial only to a more spiritual sphere.

2. If we are stopped in our ethical speculations by the presence of evil, which appears to us an unnecessary and dispensable element in the moral government of the universe; we must remember, that in every other inquiry our progress is checked by a precisely analogous barrier. In physical science, for instance, no philosopher has ever been able to get beyond phenomena, (or, visible results.) These he can accumulate and classify: he can challenge our admiration for their beautiful analogies and mutual relations: but, from an acquaintance with causes, mysterious modes

of operation, and dark intervals of transition, his mere deficiency of optical power, (magnifying, approximating, and microscopic,) even if there were no other obstacle, must ever hold him back. He can observe and record all that is done, but can never penetrate the guarded secret of *how* it is done. Then, while we must feel, on the one hand, that this necessary imperfection of our knowledge, coupled with our strong and instinctive desire to complete it, amounts to a distinct promise, that our curiosity shall be richly gratified hereafter; we cannot, on the other hand, expect a certainty and satisfaction in ethical science, which is unattainable in other departments of inquiry.

3. We can, however, argue from analogy in anticipating, that whatever may now appear to us anomalous in Ethics, will be explained away hereafter, in the same manner as we look forward to the solution of our physical problems.

4. We infer from the Creator's manifest benevolence to His other creatures, that we, in proportion as we are higher in the scale of being, must be objects of a still higher exercise of His Providence, though we may be slow to comprehend all the details of the arrangement. As their happiness is inferior in kind and degree, and unalloyed by moral life, of which their faculties are incapable; so, the happiness of which

are capable, being of a higher order, but chequered with evil, will be hereafter made perfect.

5. A system of what we should *now* call unmixed happiness, would not, most probably, if we had never known any other condition, be happiness at all. Happiness is a relative idea, which we can conceive only by contrast with its opposite; and it may be that we would be unable, under any other than the existing circumstances, to appreciate the enjoyments of a future state.

6. It is not the fact that vice is ever, even in this world, really successful. The supremacy of conscience renders such a condition impossible. The mind alone is the seat of happiness or misery; and the mental states of the virtuous and vicious are as different, as a state of bodily health and bodily disease. The former is analogous to the calm and refreshing repose of the body in its normal state, in which it derives a pleasure from the mere sensation of existence; while "the condition of vicious indulgence," to use the words of Dr. Chalmers, "in its mingled gratification and suffering, is analogous to that of one urged by incessant cravings of hunger, and whose organs of taste are incapable of enjoyment from the flavour of any food."

7. But the most formidable argument against the ordinary deductions of a Natural Theology

is contained in the following objection. The highest property of wisdom is evidently to achieve the greatest amount of good, or the most desirable end, by the most simple and direct means; a principle which we see carried out in the higher forms of animal organization; the anomaly, therefore, is, that any complicated machinery should be at all necessary; and, that the several results, considered as the designs of Omnipotence, should not be produced by an instantaneous change, such as would suggest the idea of an absolute and simple *fiat*. That a probation of pain should constitute a necessary title to the enjoyment of happiness is not, it is said, consistent with our idea of the Omnipotence that can illumine a world by the simple command, "Let there be light!" It is asked, why may not human society be so constituted, as to render all precepts and promises and warnings as unnecessary, as they are, in too many instances, unavailing, &c.: why is it that the moral soil, like that on which the curse was laid, yields thorns and thistles more spontaneously than the corn and the wine? These questions have been frequently proposed in countless forms, and would be perplexing, if we had no anticipations beyond this present life; but the answer is not difficult. In the first place, it is probable that a close analogy may exist between the consequences of moral evil and physical pain. We

learn from physiology, that pain is simply a warning, giving us intimation of danger or injury, and thus contributing to the preservation of animal life; a principle beautifully illustrated by the fact, that the most sensitive nerves are those terminating immediately inside the skin: and thus we may perhaps look upon mental suffering also as a monitor, teaching us by example what we should avoid or discontinue, and—which is its great use in this point of view—supplying us with *a reason* for our obedience to the Divine law.

In the second place, pain is in the moral world what the *vis inertiae* is in the physical. If there were no such principle in the material world as gravitation, our bodily strength, having no resistance to overcome, could receive no development, and would in any case be useless. In like manner, if human society presented no abject misery, no suffering, no dark despair, no bitter tears, there could be no moral heroism: the purest and loftiest energies of our moral constitution, those sentiments of justice and mercy, sympathy and benevolence, which it is our business in this life to cultivate for that more extensive sphere of action that awaits our best and noblest faculties in a more perfect life to come, all these would lie dormant; human life would cease to be the training school of the soul, and become purposeless.

If space permitted a digression into Metaphysics, our faculties of memory and imagination—being, so to speak, the alchymy by which we extract a value and a beauty from common and unsightly things, and the antidote by which we counteract much of the pain inseparable from our present state—would furnish instances of the close adaptation of our mental constitution to our position in the universe. But, confining ourselves to our proper subject, we shall find, that all our passions and affections, blended as they are,—forming that combination of self-interest and external sympathy, which maintains a system of fellowship, and mutual dependence—are as precisely adapted to the conditions of a finite existence, as they would be unsuited to one of unlimited duration.

Hence, it may not be unreasonable to conclude, that certain classes of those feelings and passions, after serving their purpose in this life, will terminate with it; and that those only of that higher order, which can operate with freedom and enjoyment amid the relations of immortality, shall survive. To this inference, indeed, we are led by approximation and analogy from phenomena of perpetual occurrence under our notice. We may observe, that, as we approach the close of our earthly pilgrimage, our passions and affec-

tions undergo a change, indicative, in cultivated minds, of an approaching transition from a more material to a more spiritual existence; and rendering that transition, when it occurs at the natural time, less violent and less regretted, than when it suddenly closes upon the hopes and aspirations of youth.

#### QUESTIONS.

Into how many branches may Natural Theology be divided?

Which of these is the more important, and why?

What is the most remarkable of the apparent inconsistencies requiring explanation?

In what instances does this anomaly most generally present itself?

How does it seem to contradict other deductions of Natural Theology?

What reply is suggested by the fact, that human life is finite?

What analogous difficulty exists in physical science?

What may be inferred from the present imperfection of our moral and physical knowledge?

What inference may we draw from the kind and degree of the happiness of inferior animals?

What would you infer from the fact, that happiness is a relative idea?

Is that a sound argument, which is based upon the successful career of vice?

What is the strongest argument against the benevolence of the existing moral system?

What answer does the analogy between moral evil and physical pain supply?

And that between moral evil and the *vis inertiae* of matter?

From the relations of our passions and affections to the present life, what do you infer as to their duration?

Are there any present phenomena suggesting this view?

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### ETHICS OF GOVERNMENT.

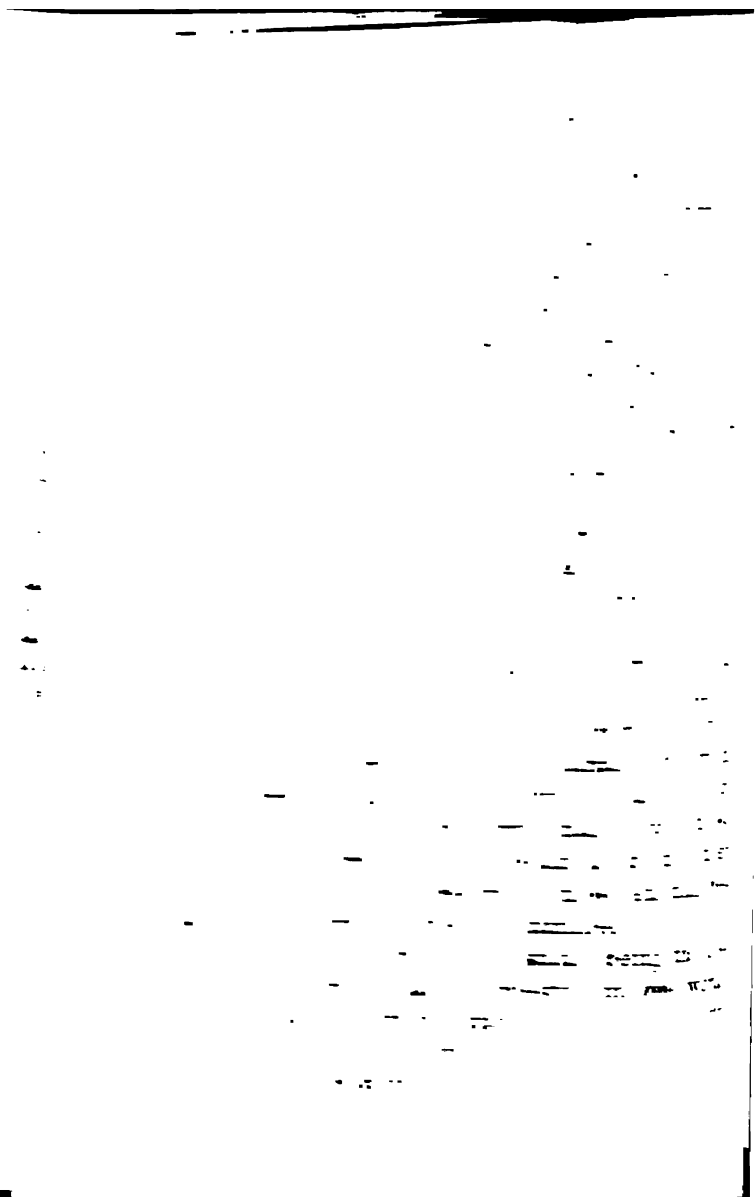
It is an axiom always recognised in theory, though too frequently denied in practice, that states are mutually and individually bound by moral obligations analogous to those which should regulate the actions of individual men. Previously to illustrating this maxim, it is necessary to define what "a *state*" is, and where exactly these heavy obligations lie; because the responsibility must necessarily rest somewhere. In considering this question, some moralists assert, that the state is neither the community, nor its public officers; but an abstract idea—a power and a right to govern, existing previously to and independently of the organization of a nation, and subsequently devolving upon some person or persons, who do not, however, constitute a state. It must be superfluous to observe, that such a theory, in the first place, is calculated to ignore the personal responsibility of all public functionaries, as abstract ideas cannot be called to account for offences; and, secondly, that it is contrary to the fact.

A state is a political establishment, formed on the principle of division of labour, and con-

sisting of those persons, whom the community, either unanimously, or by a majority of voices, agrees to invest with political power; that power consisting of the portion of each individual's personal liberty and right of property, which he is satisfied to surrender in exchange for protection in the legitimate use of the remainder. This arrangement is the result of a contract ratified by the solemn oaths of rulers on the one side, and the representatives of the community on the other; and a state is, therefore, no more an abstract idea, than is a board of commissioners, or a mercantile firm.

The rights of a state, arising under this contract, are, obedience to all laws not inconsistent with those of God; the power of exacting from the community such contributions of money as may be sufficient, with honesty and prudence, to defray the expenses of legislation, executive administration, and defence; and the discretion of making war upon and treaties with other states. Correlative to these rights, are the obligations to protect the lives, properties, and reputations of their several individual subjects.

Here we have a twofold classification of rights and obligations—the moral and the political; the former existing between governors and subjects, and defined by municipal law (*jus civile*); the latter between state and state, and forming the



sume, or encroach upon, or insult, the helplessness of a weaker government, on the same principle that a greater command of wealth and influence cannot justify one individual in oppressing his more humble neighbours. And a state whose policy is to annex province after province, merely because they are too feeble for resistance, is equally guilty, and equally certain to be overtaken by retribution, with the individual who employs perfidy and extortion in adding house to house, and field to field, while he forgets that "Nemesis, though her feet be of lead, has hands of iron."

2. That all national treaties and compacts shall be fulfilled in the sense in which they are *known to be understood*; on the principle that regulates promises and contracts between individuals, in which it would be considered dishonest to attach alternately to the same terms, technical and popular (esoteric and exoteric) meanings, according to circumstances.

3. That in all diplomatic negotiations, the state shall regard the interests of its own subjects as a consideration outweighing all others; and will, by neglecting or sacrificing them, incur the same guilt as a father, who confers gratuitous favours upon strangers at the expense and to the prejudice of his own children.

4. That any combination or conspiracy be-

tween two or more states, with a view to the oppression of any section of the human race, is an act of the same character, in the eyes of the moralist—though not always perhaps in those of the politician—as a combination of two or more individuals for the robbery or assassination of another. Outrages of this nature are ostensibly prohibited by that provision of the *jus gentium*, known as “the balance of power,” which is supposed to guard against any one government or combination of governments becoming sufficiently strong to overpower the rest; but, in consequence of the impossibility of defining the natural boundaries of nations by any determinate rule, *might* and *right* have been hitherto regarded by the generality of politicians as interchangeable terms; and all the great empires that have ever yet arisen, have been consolidated in open defiance of the theory of the “balance of power.”

The other class of obligations—the domestic and paternal, as they may be figuratively called—are of a much more complex character, involve duties of a more constant and diversified nature, and are founded upon principles less obvious and more deeply seated in our nature. The compact between sovereigns and nations differs in one remarkable particular from parental authority and responsibility, whenever it is not necessarily founded either upon a moral or physical supe-

riority, or upon a true relation of protection and dependence; and, to an uninterested spectator—if any such can be supposed to exist—the obedience of a whole community to one individual, who may be neither stronger, nor wiser, nor more virtuous, than the average of his subjects, must present one of the strangest phenomena in society. It is to be easily accounted for, however, by the existence of a conservative instinct in our nature. Society, even in its less complicated phases, consists of a net-work of selfish interests, which would be thrown into violent collision by the rupture of the social compact; and the cases are extreme and exceptional, in which it would not be safer to endure the inconveniences of a partial encroachment upon the rights of the subject, than to seek redress by a forcible and sudden repudiation of the contract. It has frequently happened in political revolutions, that the last state of the nation was worse than the first; because, in the absence of that moral power, which intellectual cultivation can alone create, a change of government can imply only a change of masters.

The obligations of a Government to its subjects, with reference to life, property, and reputation, involve the following subordinate duties.

1. A careful and solemn consideration of the provocations to engage in foreign wars.

When we take into account the exertions which an enlightened community will make, to mitigate the ravages of a pestilence or a famine, we must feel, that a war, equally destructive of human life, and of the happiness and comfort of private families, cannot, without unpardonable guilt, be undertaken through mere motives of personal ambition or personal enmity on the part of princes. The evils of war, independently of the sacrifice of human life, are, the creation of national debts, and, consequently, of oppressive taxation; the elevation of a military class to an undue and frequently dangerous degree of political power; and the inflammation of many of the worst passions of our nature: while the only countervailing benefits are, the removal of personal and commercial restrictions in intercourse with foreign nations; because, under the modern system of colonial administration, conquered provinces scarcely produce any revenue. The maxims of Dr. Paley are, therefore, probably the most rational guide of statesmen in this particular. These are, "to place their glory and their emulation not in extent of territory, but in raising the greatest quantity of happiness out of a given territory." And, "never to pursue national *honour* as distinct from national *interest*."

2. A conscientious exercise of the power of imposing taxes for civil purposes, in which the

governments of nations are exposed to many strong temptations, of such a sort, that it may be doubted whether a government has ever existed under which public services have been rewarded in exact proportion to their value and importance; or public money has not been abused for the purpose of enriching favourites and sycophants, and of retaining the power which the community should always be at liberty to retract.

The most obvious principles of justice demand, that those persons who have the more to lose, and who consequently stand more in need of protection, shall contribute proportionately more to the national exchequer; and although many of the fiscal imposts of all governments operate as sumptuary laws in falling exclusively upon the wealthy; still there are, almost every where, many glaring exceptions to that equitable arrangement: for instance, taxes levied on the necessities of life, that should be strictly confined to luxuries; an industrious middle class laid under contribution, for the support of the idle and unproductive; the hardly-earned income of a professional man, terminable with life, burdened equally with an income received without exertion, and transmissible by hereditary succession; and the remuneration of public services graduated not by their value or difficulty, but by the artificial rank of the officials.



In connection with this part of the subject, it may be observed, that the existence of a large amount of pauperism in every wealthy community has been ever regarded by moralists as a startling anomaly, and presents to the economist a "Mordecai sitting at the gate" of every social system. To use the emphatic words of Dr. Whewell: "Men perish of hunger in opulent cities; many are mendicants, who are supposed to have nothing of their own, and depend upon the casual bounty of their fellow-citizens. Many, belonging to the industrial classes, are frequently destitute; though willing to work, they can find none to hire them, and they have expended all their previous earnings. Does the duty of humanity in the State admit of its tolerating the existence of such things?" The only imaginable remedy for such a condition as compulsory relief seems only to aggravate the evil; is the diffusion of a degree of moral and intellectual advancement, such as human society has not yet attained; and such as may modify the close and violent contrasts of colossal wealth and extreme penury; of intellectual refinement and gross ignorance; of education inadequately provided and crime expensively punished.

The third obligation, relating to the reputation—the moral character—of the community, includes the duties of rendering justice universally

accessible, by cheapening and simplifying the operation of the laws, and adopting a rational and effective system of punishments; and the still more indispensable, because previously existing, duties of upholding religion and diffusing education.

With respect to punishments, there are but three possible or imaginable motives for their infliction; either to gratify a vindictive feeling, or to deter others from similar crimes, or to effect a reformation in the criminals themselves. Of these motives, the first is of course universally disowned, and cannot be supposed to influence public authorities; the second is an object unlikely to be attained; and the third is one impossible to be effected by rigorous and extreme penalties; because, in the one case, a punishment beyond the magnitude of the offence serves only to create a sympathy with the offender; and, in the other, the punishment destroys at once the criminal himself and his chances of improvement. It is clear then, that human beings should arrogate to themselves as seldom as may be, consistently with the safety of society, the discretion of inflicting extreme penalties; and should direct their attention rather to the more humane, more economical, and infinitely more effectual object of *preventing* crime. "We must have," says Dr. Whewell, "something different from the axe,

the scourge, the chain, and the branding iron, in order to raise the minds of men to any elevated standard of morals." Some appeal to the more generous feelings would be a more effectual agency. The difference is that between a friend and a slave; between affection and self-sacrifice on the one side, and fear and hatred on the other.

Passing on, however, from this very debateable question, to the consideration of lighter and more ordinary punishments, we find that these are, for the most part, unfairly adjusted. Personal liberty—to adduce a very familiar instance—is a right more indispensable to the poor, whose existence depends upon their personal attention to some business, than to the wealthy; and, therefore, a commutation of punishment into a pecuniary fine, which the rich man can pay without inconvenience, is unjust; unless the amount of the fine be impartially graduated according to the means of the offender.

On the association of religion with civil government and secular education, it is almost impossible to advance any theory that will not be rejected, either by those who desire altogether to laicize government and education, or by those who wish to maintain the sacerdotal supremacy belonging to a bygone age, when the ministers of religion were the only educated members of the community. It appears, however, that as the ave-

rage of men cannot be safely entrusted with power and responsibility, without some test of a spiritual nature, so long as the State imposes oaths for the administration of justice, or the security of allegiance, it must be impossible to avoid recognising and providing for the religious duties and observances involved, even if there were no higher and ulterior motive. Such a principle has been always recognised in the connection with the State of a religious establishment of some sort; though the original intention has been in many cases perverted into a combination for the mutual support of political and spiritual despotism.

With respect to education, which involves just at present a still more acrimonious discussion, a moralist may be permitted to say, that it cannot, with safety, be either altogether divorced from, or made to consist exclusively of, religion. In the latter case, the purest religion will be but too apt to degenerate into superstition; while, in the former, it will very possibly be neglected as a superstition; except perhaps by some few more exalted minds, whom the questions, which at first interest the intellect only, eventually lead to those higher speculations that form the materials of a natural theology.

## QUESTIONS.

What is the danger of regarding the State as an abstract idea?

Upon what principle are States really constituted?

What are the rights and obligations consequently arising?

By what laws are the two classes of rights defined?

What does Lord Bacon say of the responsibilities of political power?

What is the obligation of the *jus gentium* respecting the rights of property?

What, with respect to contracts?

And to domestic interests, as against foreigners?

What is the *balance of power*?

How is it generally maintained?

What is the apparent anomaly in political obedience?

How is it to be explained?

What are the obligations of a government respecting war and taxation?

What are the evils and benefits of war?

What are Dr. Paley's maxims respecting war?

What are the most ordinary abuses of financial systems?

Does pauperism admit of any *direct* remedy?

What are the motives of punishment?

Why are extreme punishments not effectual?

Why is the State bound to maintain religion?

How far should religion and education be combined?





